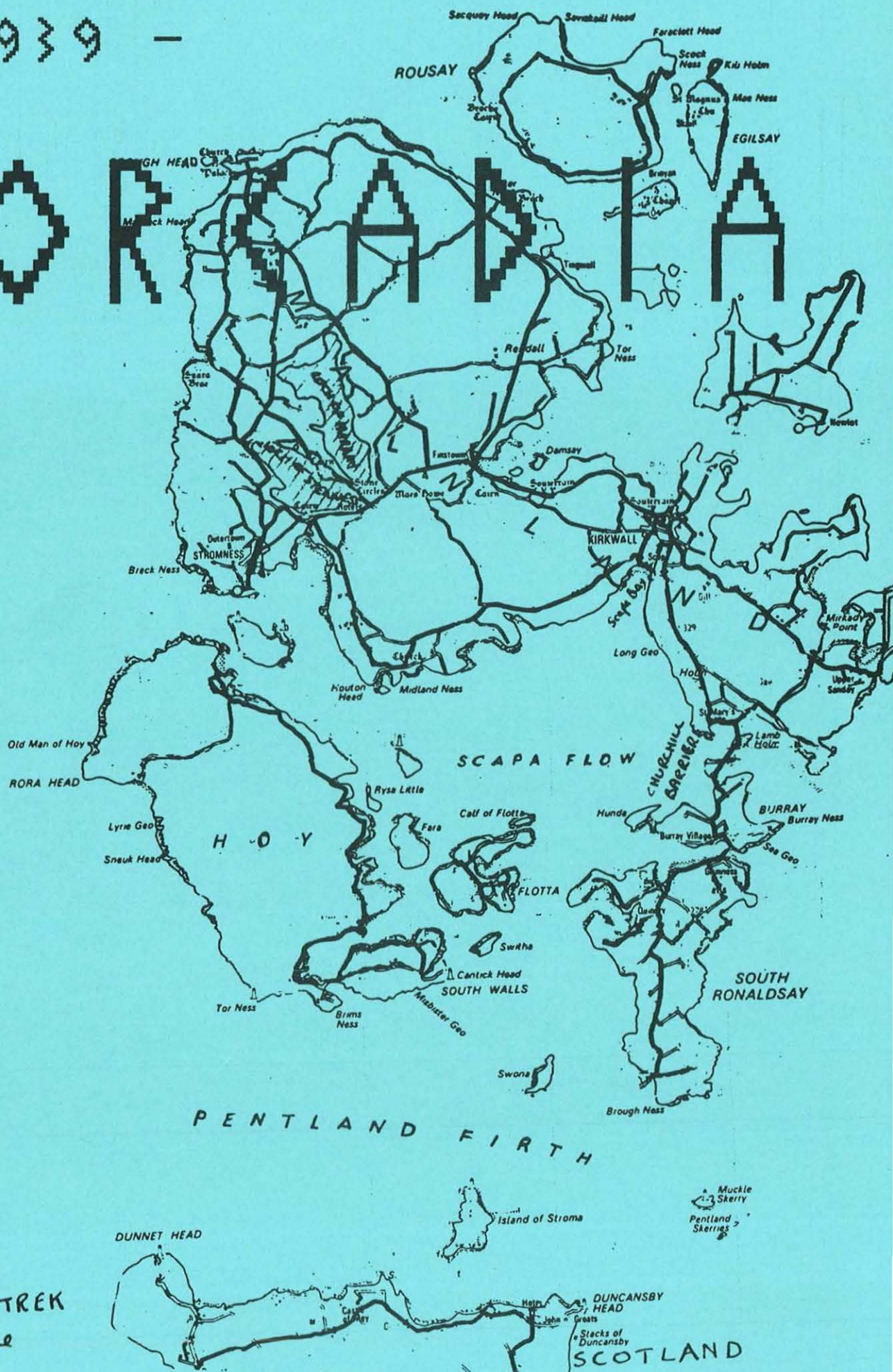
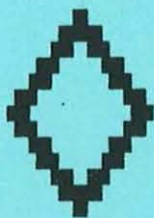


ATLANTIC OCEAN



a
STAR TREK
fanzine

1939 - ORCADIA

by

Joyce Devlin

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A ScoTpress publication

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St Magnus
Cathedral

1939 - ORCADIA

by

Joyce Devlin

PREFACE

1939 - ORCADIA was started the weekend of the Zeebrugge disaster - the day the North Sea ferry Herald of Free Enterprise sailed with her bow doors open and became the worst merchant ship sea disaster since the Titanic.

I was in the middle of reading the book The Royal Oak Disaster for background information for Orcadia and had written the first few pages when the newsflash came over the TV that a North Sea ferry had capsized. For those of you who don't know me or anything about me, my life at that time revolved around the North Sea and North Sea ferries, my man being First Officer aboard the P & O North Sea ferry St. Magnus. I was in a wild panic, as the newsflash just said 'a North Sea ferry' and it wasn't until the next newsflash half an hour later that the ship was named.

Each time I picked up the story to write some more there has been something on the news or TV, either about the Herald of Free Enterprise or about another accident at sea. The news about Piper Alpha arrived while I was writing; even when I sat down to write this preface the news came through about the Nordic, another P & O North Sea ferry, and her engine room fire.

Not again! I thought - by this time I had come to the conclusion that the story was jinxed and never meant to be finished, although it was born on the MV St. Magnus on one of my many trips to Stromness.

At this point I must thank Sheila Clark, for without her encouragement to keep writing, 1939 - ORCADIA would never have been completed. There was many a time the lid of the bucket was open, and many a time Sheila's ear was aching with my moans about yet another disaster on the news as soon as I decided to write some more of Orcadia. Many, many thanks, Sheila, for without you to turn to this story would have been in the bin.

My own feelings about the story are - thank goodness it's finished! I picked it up to write the ending one weekend; only to discover on the Monday morning that the St. Magnus was nearly blown up after 500 gallons of aviation fuel spilt onto her cargo deck in gale force winds; a gas tanker was also damaged. Luckily it was her top deck, which is exposed to the elements, for had it been in her car deck, she would have gone up like a fireball - with all hands.

1939 - ORCADIA was conceived as a follow-up to 1942 - FROM STARSHIP TO LANCASTER, in which we first met Hans Wiseman (in Norway). The events referred to in 1942 and in 1939 were genuine events of the war. 1939 was conceived back in '85 aboard the St. Magnus in the middle of a force 8 - 10 gale, and it took me well over a year to research and develop the idea. 1942, on the other hand, was taken from 'home base', so to speak, as the old RAF

station and hospital in it were just 20 minutes from my front door.

In 1942, we discovered that Hans Wiseman is a man from the 23rd century with a fixation for the second world war. He had used the Guardian of Forever to take him back to an important point in the war (the heavy water experiments in Norway), with the idea of ensuring that Germany won the war; and the Enterprise crew was ordered to bring him back. This was done with the aid of the Time Guardian, and Kirk, McCoy, Scott and the others went back in time to 1942, with Kirk as an RAF squadron leader flying a Lancaster.

Wiseman was eventually captured with the aid of Spock, much to the surprise of the crew of the Lancaster. With Wiseman aboard, the men from the future were returned to their own time, with the Lancaster being reported lost over the North Sea. This included McCoy, who had stowed away on the Lancaster despite strict instructions from Kirk to stay put.

1939 is a follow-up. Wiseman has escaped from Starfleet and once again returns to the war years; this time to Orkney in the period known as the Phoney War; and once again Kirk and his crew are sent after him.

ORCADIA

Captain's Log 8701.16

As per Admiralty orders enclosed herein, the Enterprise is en route to the planet Azaria. Our mission is a class one priority. Log entry closed.

Captain James Kirk thumped off the log mike and sank back into his command chair.

He was angry. Life in Starfleet was never dull, and this latest set of orders was no exception to the rule. However, anyone who knew him well enough could see by the look on his face that the normally cool, calm and collected Captain was very angry indeed.

Dr. McCoy, who was fully unaware of the situation, chose that moment to saunter onto the bridge on one of his daily inspections. One look at his friend's face told him something was wrong, and he hadn't been told what it was.

As usual, curiosity got the better of the ship's Chief Medical Officer.

"Jim? What's wrong?" he asked as he came to a standstill at the Captain's side.

"Just about everything, Bones," Kirk answered viciously.

"That tells me something - and nothing," McCoy answered, trying to defuse the situation.

"Starfleet has managed to lose Hans Wiseman," Kirk stated bluntly, and returned to the memories of what he had endured trying to capture the man a few months - and three centuries - ago.

"You're joking!" McCoy replied in disbelief.

"No, Doctor, the Captain is *not* joking," Spock informed him.

"And they want us to find him?" McCoy questioned. Now he understood why the Captain was fuming.

"That's about it, Bones. We're on standby, waiting further instructions from Starfleet. Honestly - imagine sending someone with a fixation like Wiseman's to an open prison!"

"All right, Jim, calm down before you blow a fuse. It's happened and there's nothing you can do about that," McCoy told him.

"Nothing I can do about it? Just you wait and see. Some nincompoop with nothing better to do than sit on his ass made the decision to put Wiseman in an open prison. Well, I intend to put hot ashes under his seat and make things boil for him! When I'm finished, he'll wish he could crawl into a pit somewhere and die!"

None of the junior officers on the bridge dared look at their superior. Most knew he had been badly injured the last time they had gone after Wiseman; each had his own thoughts on the subject - and they were all much the same as the Captain's.

"Feeling better now?" McCoy asked. "Or do you need some

dizpan?"

"No - I feel worse," Kirk replied. "The more I think about it, the madder I feel." However, that wasn't strictly true; his temper was under better control now he had got the immediate irritation off his chest.

"Well, why not tell Starfleet what you think?" McCoy suggested.

His answer was simply a warning look from the Captain, which said, *Don't push me, Bones.*

"Sir, I have Starfleet Admiral McKay for you," Uhura said from the communications console.

"All right, Uhura. Put him on the main screen. Let's hear what he has to say," Kirk instructed as an audible hush fell on the bridge. All eyes were on the main screen as the Admiral's face appeared.

"Enterprise here. Go ahead, sir," Kirk said.

"You're not going to like this, Jim," the Admiral said quietly. "Wiseman did as we suspected. We have just received a communique from the Time Guardian, telling us where Wiseman has gone. It seems crazy, though Wiseman must have his reasons for wanting to go to Orkney, in Scotland, early in 1939 Old Calendar." The Admiral obviously found it funny that anyone should want to go there; despite his best efforts, a broad smile crossed his face.

"Orkney, 1939?" Kirk questioned even as he noticed that his Chief Engineer had straightened abruptly from his work on the auxiliary engineering console, an odd look on his face. "I don't think I've heard of the place, but... is there something funny about there, sir?" He had forgotten that McKay was also a Scot.

"Oh, come on, Jim! Your history grades were among the highest ever recorded in the Academy. Surely you remember hearing about the great wars of the twentieth century?"

"Well, yes, but... "

"*Nobody* wanted to be posted to Orkney. It was known as the Hell of the North. Once you were there there was no getting off if you didn't own a boat - so our man is trapped, so to speak." His Scottish accent broadened as he considered this.

Kirk shook his head. "I studied the major battles of the great wars, sir, but I don't remember being told much about Scottish history."

"Oh, well, never mind. Not even the Academy lecturers are perfect," the Admiral said with a dry humour. Then he returned briskly to business. "Your orders are to proceed directly to the planet Azaria and to the Time Guardian. You are to go back in time and bring Wiseman back - dead or alive. And this time, Jim, try to stay in one piece, please? Your cover had better be navy, as the Orkneys were primarily a naval base. The Guardian will be awaiting your arrival. Any questions?"

"Dead or alive?" Kirk questioned.

"That's from the top, Jim. That order stands. We want him

back, preferably dead I'm afraid. He has had every rehabilitation treatment known to us, and *still* he is insistent that Germany should have won the second world war. You could say he is a problem and we don't know what to do with him. Anything else?"

"No."

"Then you have your orders. Good luck. Starfleet out." The transmission from Starfleet HQ was cut as the Admiral's face disappeared from the main screen.

Everyone on the bridge seemed to let his breath out at that point as Kirk looked from McCoy to Spock.

"Where the hell in Scotland is Orkney?" Kirk asked out loud.

"Orkney's nae in Scotland, sir," Scott answered.

"But McKay just said it was," McCoy said, confused.

"That's a matter of interpretation, sir. The Orkneys are a group of islands off the northern tip of Scotland, separated from it by a stretch of water known as the Pentland Firth. But the island folk don't, to this day, regard themselves as being part of Scotland," Scott informed them as he stepped down from the upper part of the bridge.

"1939 was the year in which World War II started," Spock reminded them.

"Well, yes - but why Orkney?" Kirk asked, puzzled. "Surely, if he wanted to influence that war, he would have been better going to Berlin."

Scott frowned, thinking. At last he said slowly, "I would imagine it's got something to do with Scapa Flow."

"Scapa Flow? What on earth is that? Come on, Scotty, enlighten us, please. Spock - you check Earth's history and see what you can come up with," Kirk ordered.

Spock returned to his computer console and started to punch in the period - 1939 - on which he required information. In the background he was aware of Scott's voice as he began to tell Kirk the story of Scapa Flow.

"It's a stretch of water - a sort of inlet between several of the islands of Orkney - there's Mainland to the north, and Hoy, Flotta and a lot of small islands on the other three sides. It played an important part in the two wars against Germany in the twentieth century, simply because it was a natural anchorage in what is a rough part of the sea as well as being a gateway to the North Atlantic; it was a perfect strategic position for intercepting enemy ships bound for the Atlantic. Add to that, Orkney was thought to be outside the range of the German torpedo-carrying aircraft, so Scapa Flow was considered to be a safe base for the British Home Fleet in 1939.

"Aye, nobody wanted to be based there, but its importance to the Allies was incalculable. You can imagine what would have happened had Orkney - and the island harbours - been captured. Scapa Flow might not have been quite as important a base as Rosyth, but it was nearly as important. Then there was the Air Force base

at Kirkwall - that's where Starfleet has its Scottish base today - and the military HQ was at Stromness."

"Scotty - how do you know all that?" Kirk asked curiously as he realised that everyone on the bridge was intent on the tale being told by the Chief Engineer.

"I was stationed on Orkney for a while just after I qualified as an engineer. Stromness is where the ferry came in, and Scapa pier is where the Liberty Boats tied up, and - "

"Scotty, that still doesn't explain how you know all this," Kirk interrupted.

"It's no' as remote as it once was, but it's still pretty cut off when the weather's bad. There's not much to do in your spare time then except read or play cards, and I was never much for the cards. The local library had a lot of books about Orkney's history and not much else... Weel, I started reading those books - "

"I thought you didn't read anything but engineering journals, Scotty," Kirk interrupted.

"Usually; but there wasna' anything else but history books there. Or fiction. Given that choice it had tae be the history. It didna' take long before I got really interested," Scott admitted. "Anyway, there's no point in being a Scot if ye dinna know the history of Scotland. Orkney is bursting at the seams wi' history... and it was a good opportunity to study life in a society that hasna' outwardly changed in centuries. Oh, it's not stagnated, but progress hasna ruined Orkney like it's done almost every place else. The people there know that the clock doesna have to run the world."

"I see. Please go on."

"Scapa Flow," McCoy interrupted as a memory of a history lesson came back to him. "I thought I recognised the name. Wasn't that where the Germans scuttled their imperial fleet at the end of the First World War?"

"Aye. In fact, you can hire a boat and dive to see some of them; the remains of the ships are still there." Scott shook his head. "I did, but... It was depressing, all those wrecks rusting away. Anyway - " He shook off his gloom. "Of course, Scapa Flow wasn't what you could call completely secure; the gaps between the islands were 'plugged' by block ships and booms - "

"What were those?" McCoy wanted to know.

"Block ships, Doctor, were ships deliberately sunk to block the way in," Spock informed him from the computer station. "Booms were heavy net barriers stretched across the water between two islands, and only opened when a ship needed to enter. I believe these were used as anti-submarine devices."

"Aye, that's right," Scott confirmed. "But they werena' what you could call completely secure. Towards the middle of the War, Italian prisoners of war were used to build the Churchill Barriers, which closed the eastern approaches to Scapa Flow. Huge blocks of concrete, varying between five and ten tons in weight, were placed all along either side of the barrier, which was constructed by using more than a quarter of a million tons of stone and rock. On top of that, causeways were built. The whole thing was in four sections,

the total length was only about a mile and a half, and in some places the depth of the water was as much as sixty feet... "

"Scotty, if these 'Churchill Barriers' weren't completed until later on in the war, why go into them?" Kirk asked.

"Because of the Royal Oak. Look, if you'd all stop asking questions I'd be able to tell you!" Scott was becoming annoyed with the constant interruptions.

"All right, go on - tell it your own way," Kirk instructed, smiling; he could understand the Scot's growing annoyance, for he too hated being interrupted in the middle of a story.

"Right, then. As I was saying, there were four channels leading into the naval anchorage and these were blocked by sunken ships during the First War, so it was considered by the Admiralty that attack from the east was impossible. Then a brilliant U-boat commander, a Lieutenant-Commander Prien, took advantage of a gap in the defences of Holm Sound. A really high tide raised the net of the boom off the sea bed, and he got into Scapa Flow and sank the Royal Oak as she sat at her anchorage off Scapa Bay... and would you credit it, he got out again safely. Well over 800 men perished. After that the navy left its anchorage at Scapa until the entrances could be safely sealed.

"Now that's historical fact, and Wiseman won't want to change *that*. After all, it was a German victory. So I'd say he's there either to try to help in the sinking or more likely to try to delay the building of the Churchill Barriers."

The Scot smiled, feeling pleased with himself. It was not often that he, rather than Spock, had information ready for the Captain.

"You could be right, Scotty."

"How did the U-boat Commander know the coast line, Mr. Scott?" Chekov asked before anyone else could.

"Weel, laddie, when I was there there was this man who used to do drawings of Scapa and the islands. His drawings are worth a fortune," he added parenthetically. "So my guess is that someone with allegiance towards Germany was there before the war started and made maps. Mark you, he'd need to have been there for quite a while so that the Islanders accepted him, otherwise there'd have been quite an uproar. They're slow to accept strangers. That's the only way I can think o'."

"Scotty, you may have just hit the nail on the head.. Can you remember the date in 1939 the Royal Oak was sunk?" Kirk asked.

"It was the night of 13/14 October, sir."

"So anyone disappearing about then would have been identified?"

"Aye."

"My guess is that Wiseman is the man who sent the information to the Germans, and he would stay put for a while... and then disappear later," Kirk commented.

"Well, Spock, it looks like we'll be leaving you here again. You know, if it wasn't for the fact that you have pointed ears and green blood - " McCoy began, not quite seriously.

"May I point out, Doctor, that if it had not been for me in 1942, Wiseman would never have been captured in the first place. However, I doubt if you recall much about that part of the mission since it was just after your escapade of stowing away on a Lancaster bomber." Spock looked like a cat who had just obtained the cream as he went down into the well of the bridge and handed Kirk a computer readout.

"You asked for that one, Bones," Kirk said. He couldn't help but smile at McCoy, who reddened with the embarrassment of being reminded of his exploit.

"I won't be so stupid this time; I learned my lesson back then," he informed them.

"Who says you're going this time, Bones?" Kirk questioned as he winked at Spock.

"I do - and don't try to stop me. After all, with your performance last time - flying into a flock of birds and blinding yourself - who knows what will happen to you if you're let loose on your own back in time." He smiled as a pained expression crossed Kirk's face. "One to me, I think?" he added with a smile.

"O.K., you win, Bones. ETA, Mr. Sulu?"

"Twenty four hours at warp factor four, sir," Sulu informed them.

"Then I suggest we adjourn this discussion. We'll meet in the briefing room at 1200 hours. By that time I may have come up with a plan of action. Uhura, inform Lieutenants Tyson and Keller to report to Briefing Room 1 at 1200 hours. Spock, you have the con. Bones, you can come with me. I have a headache, and need a couple of your wonder pills."

ORKNEY - 1939

The islands of Orkney had endured the first great war and had come through the experience relatively unchanged. She had sailed through like the ships that sailed in in the night to anchor in the haven of Scapa Flow.

It was Scapa Flow that had made Orkney so famous during the first war, and looked like doing the same in the second, even although it was only a matter of a few weeks old. The sleepy islands where time seems to stand still had suddenly come alive again with military personnel.

The harbour at Stromness was teeming with activity, with the merchant ship St. Ola being used to ferry men and equipment from the Scottish mainland to the island, from Scrabster to Stromness across the dreaded Pentland Firth, into Hoy Sound, round the point of Ness, past the small islands of the Holms; from there those who were not used to the sea could see their disembarkment point - the North Pier. Most of them were grateful to get their feet onto dry land, for although the crossing from Scrabster was only six miles wide and

took only three hours, many of the men were heard to comment that it was more like three days and some were even heard to add that they didn't care how terrible the Hell of the North was, they hoped they would never be posted away, for it was bound to be better than the trip across the Pentland Firth with its whirlpools that they would have to take to leave again.

Stromness had been the naval headquarters during the First World War as the Royal Navy's grand fleet had its base at Scapa Flow; this base had never completely closed down, even during the years of peace. Stromness was used to having a few naval personnel around. And McKay's Hotel, which had been the island's Naval HQ in the Great War, was now being transformed once again into offices - this time, not Naval, but Military HQ.

Orkney's capital and main town, Kirkwall, was playing host to the Naval Air Command and the Army, which was busy setting up Nissan huts to act as temporary, makeshift barracks.. Its skyline was instantly recognisable from the airfield a mile and a half outside the town because of the red sandstone cathedral of St. Magnus standing tall and proud as part of it.

Kirkwall's streets - like those of Stromness - had been built close together, with storehouses and secret alleyways - 'secret' only because they were so well hidden in between the houses. Her harbour was small and was home to the island's small fishing fleet. The island's main hospital was in Kirkwall.

The islands were no longer sleepy. They had come alive with military personnel. As well as setting up camps, they were constructing anti-aircraft gun posts along the eastern approaches to Scapa Flow, which was no more than half an hour's walk from Kirkwall. The sailors based at Scapa Bay thought nothing of the walk (or the ten-minute bus run) when they wished to spend their liberty periods in the island's pubs.

The sailors were more fortunate than their army counterparts, who had to make do with canvas tents in the icy cold of the islands. Although most were prepared for this, they were not prepared for the mud. There was a lot of it - sticky, clinging to everything and anything.

It was not the Germans who were the army's worst enemy in Orkney; it was the mud.

U.S.S. ENTERPRISE

At exactly 1200 hours, Lt. Commander Scott entered the briefing room accompanied by Lieutenants Tyson and Keller, who had been vainly questioning the engineer all the way up in the turbolift as to the nature of the mission. As they took their place at the table, Kirk entered, followed by Spock and McCoy. The three men present stood to attention, and waited for the three officers to take their seats.

"Please be seated," Kirk instructed.

When everyone was settled, Kirk began to outline the mission and their instructions.

"Starfleet has managed to lose an old acquaintance of ours, and

we are instructed to bring him back - dead or alive." Jim Kirk let the orders sink in. He had deliberately not said who the acquaintance was. He waited.

"Wiseman," the two lieutenants said together.

"Yes, gentlemen. Wiseman. Starfleet tried to rehabilitate him, and failed. He managed to escape; Starfleet wants him back, as I said, dead or alive. As far as we know, the Guardian of Time has him trapped in a place called Orkney, in 1939 Old Calendar."

"1939? What's he doing back there? That was the start of that war. I'd have thought he'd go for something later in the war," Dave Tyson commented.

"As far as we can ascertain, the only thing of any importance to have happened there in 1939 was the sinking of the Royal Oak with the loss of 800 men. That led to the building of the Churchill Barriers to protect the harbour at Scapa Flow. Mr. Scott thinks that Wiseman may be trying to stop the Barriers being built.

"The plan is simple. According to the ship's history computer, a team of five officers from Naval Intelligence was assigned to investigate how the U-boat managed to break in to Scapa Flow and torpedo the Royal Oak. We, gentlemen, will be that team of investigators. All the information you require is in this." He passed out duplicate copies of the computer printout Spock had handed him on the bridge. "Read it, and report to the quartermaster to be measured up for your naval uniforms. Any questions?"

They all shook their heads.

"Good. Dismissed."

The men rose from their seats, noses already in the readout, when Tyson spotted the name of the investigation team's leader.

"Say, look at this! It says a Commander Kirk and his team of investigators arrived after the Royal Oak sank. It looks like we've already been back in time!"

"No. It's just coincidence," Keller disagreed.

"We won't have to sleep in tents, will we, sir?"

"I don't know," Kirk replied.

"The HQ was in the Stromness Hotel," Scott began. He hesitated. "No, of course, it wasn't the Stromness then, it was McKay's. We'll probably get rooms there."

"Coincidence, Spock, or reality?" Kirk asked as the briefing room emptied, leaving only the Captain, his First Officer and the Doctor.

"You know as well as I do that time is a never-ending circle."

"Yes. It does look like I've been there before, then," Kirk replied.

"Not you in person, Jim," McCoy objected.

Kirk didn't answer. Instead, he turned to the Vulcan. "Spock, I'm sorry you're being left behind again, but..."

"Yes, Captain, I know. As the good Doctor reminded me before, I would, quote, *probably cause complete panic amongst the population, one sight of those pointed ears and Vulcan eyebrows would be enough. God help them if you cut yourself. Green blood? Ha, now that really would be the end, end quote.*"

McCoy winced as he realised how nasty the statement sounded. "Did I really say that?" he questioned.

"Yes - and more. I can quote you if you like," Spock retorted.

"I always knew you were a walking computer, Spock. Well, Jim, let's pay the quartermaster a visit. You should look dashing as a naval Captain."

"Drop it, Bones."

Slightly shamefaced, McCoy nodded and fell silent.

"Right - I think a few hours' sleep is called for." Kirk smiled as they walked out of the briefing room.

"Hey, I'm meant to say that! After all, I'm the Doctor around here!" McCoy protested.

"You're getting slow in your old age, Bones," Kirk told him. He smiled and headed for the turbolift.

"How's your headache now, Jim?" McCoy questioned as they stopped at the turbolift.

"Fine, fine."

"Well, I'm going to give you another one, Jim. Do you realise you can't be a Captain? You'll have to be a Commander."

"Commander?"

"Well, you're Naval Intelligence. A Captain without a ship was almost unheard-of back then."

"Point taken, Bones."

At 0600 hours the Enterprise established her orbit around the planet Azaria. Contact was established with the Guardian and permission received for the landing party to beam down.

Kirk, followed by Spock, strolled into the transporter room, which was looking like a baggage terminal at a shuttle port. Strewn untidily on the floor were five navy kitbags. Standing around, adding to the generally untidy look of the room, were Scott, McCoy, Tyson and Keller. Spock's eyebrows reached up into his hairline as he took in the situation.

"Oh boy," was all that Kirk said and shook his head.

"You don't look too bad, Jim - in fact it quite suits you," McCoy said. "The girls'll flock round you."

"They always do, Bones."

"I've heard that before... and these damn things itch," came McCoy's reply.

"According to this readout, there were no military females until later on in the war," Keller read out.

"Well, at least you lot won't come back with any broken hearts," McCoy retorted.

With that, the landing party followed their Captain's lead. Each took his own kitbag and found a place. As usual, McCoy started to grumble.

"Why am I always included in these things? I joined up to practice medicine, not to have my atoms scrambled at every turn!"

"You're included, Bones, because you said you were coming," Kirk reminded him. "However, if you want to stay behind, that's fine by me; one less to worry about ending up in the guardhouse." Kirk smiled as McCoy remained completely still. He gave the Doctor a couple of seconds to move, then when he didn't, he finished, "Energise."

"Who'll keep you out of the..." The irrepressible McCoy's statement was lost in the hum of the transporter.

The six men materialised in a very small room. It was no surprise for them to find that there was only about an inch of head room above Spock's head. Each knew the reason for this; the Guardian was only three and a half feet tall, and completely bald. As the transporter released them, McCoy was heard to say "...guardhouse."

The Guardian stepped forward, his hand held out to greet the Captain.

"Captain Kirk. It is nice to see you again. I only wish it was under different circumstances."

"So do I, sir," Kirk replied, as the transporter hummed again and deposited the kitbags in the room.

"Let me explain what happened. I was setting the time portal for Orkney, 1939, to send a couple of history researchers back to observe the beginning of the war and the events of October of that year, when Wiseman - yes, I recognised him - appeared from nowhere. He just pushed me aside and ran through. I am not even sure if he knew exactly where he would land, except that it was in the years of World War II.

"Captain, I strongly advise you not to bring him back alive. If you do, this will go on happening; the man is possessed."

Kirk was about to ask a question when the Guardian answered it for him.

"Yes, you brought him back before, but rehabilitation has failed. If you bring him back alive this time, you will have to go after him again. Believe me, I know."

"I see, sir," Spock said. He seemed to be the only one who

followed exactly what the Guardian meant.

"Mr. Spock. How nice to see you again. You look well. Now, you know you can't play any part just now - it is up to the Captain and his Terran team. However, you may well be needed, just like last time, if things go wrong. Well, gentlemen, it is time. Here are your papers. You will arrive on Monday 16th October, two days after the Royal Oak was sunk. You will report to Military HQ at Stromness; you are expected. That is all I can do. The rest is up to you."

"Yes, sir," Kirk replied.

"Captain, please take your kitbags and take your places on the circular platform."

The Captain lifted the kitbag marked 'KIRK' and stepped up onto the platform, followed by the others. The roof was so low that they had to put the bags on the floor in front of them rather than carry them on their shoulders.

"Here we go again," McCoy muttered.

"Shut up, Bones," Kirk ordered as the Guardian went to the controls and pressed several keys.

"Good luck!" he called as the effect of the machine caught them and shimmered them away.

Spock watched them go in silence; silently wishing them luck.

"They will be all right, Mr. Spock. Your Captain has been well prepared. However, I can understand your worry."

"Yes, you are right. My thanks." With that, Spock bade the Guardian farewell and transported back aboard the Enterprise.

ORKNEY: SCAPA PIER

Hans Wiseman watched silently as more bodies were brought ashore in the Liberty boats that once carried the men on their shore leave. Wiseman tied yet another small boat up at Scapa Pier. He had nothing to feel guilty about; he was only doing his self-appointed job. And his information had been used. His drawings of the landscapes and waterfronts served a double purpose - everyone knew him as an artist who had decided to return home to Orkney from Scotland. His line drawings and paintings sold well, and with the small income he received as piermaster he was considered to be quite comfortably off.

His job on the islands was done; now it was only a waiting game. He would be well rewarded back in Germany where he could once again use his own name and not that of the man he had killed, Duncan Rendall.

His mind drifted back to his first meeting with Rendall, whose identity papers and ration book he now held. The man had been a stroke of luck, the likeness close enough to enable him to take his place.

Wiseman had materialised on a ship somewhere in the middle of

the ocean, completely confused and unaware of where he was. The Orcadian leaning on the rail watching the water had befriended him and within half an hour had told him about his life as a child on Orkney. Now the islands were calling him back, the reason he was on the St. Ola and heading for Stromness in Orkney.

The plan had quickly formed. He would kill the Orcadian and take his place. The accent had been no bother to master; Wiseman had a talent for accents.

No-one knew he was back in time except the old man - the Guardian. Yes; he should have killed him when he had the chance. Then he would have been sure no-one would be able to follow him and take him back. He knew that this time he would kill himself rather than go back to any of those hellish rehabilitation centres where they tried to make him believe things that were completely opposed to everything he truly believed.

Wiseman felt at home here; he was a man born centuries too late to fit into the ordered life of the Federation. Life here would be fun. He was back where - when - he wanted to be, and with his knowledge of the mistakes Germany had made he could act to prevent them. Germany would win the war, and he, Wiseman, would be honoured.

Yes, he thought. I should have been born in this century.

He knew that if there was going to be a search party looking for him it would come soon. With those thoughts in mind he made a mental note of the faces of everyone who came ashore at Scapa Pier. He was waiting for one man, a Vulcan named Spock, for he had a score to settle with him. He was quite sure that Starfleet would send Spock again, if only because the Vulcan knew him.

Only this time he would be ready, and the Vulcan would die. He was sure of that.



SCOTLAND

The entrance of the railway station at Aberdeen hadn't changed much in years. Its dirty appearance was due as much to the droppings of the pigeons that littered the place as to the rubbish dropped by the people passing through, though much of the dirt was hidden in the darkness that still enveloped it despite the slowly lightening sky of the hour before dawn. A horse and cart stood waiting patiently in the street outside.

Only the animal saw the twinkling lights as Kirk and his men shimmered into the twentieth century.

Scott glanced round. "Looks like Aberdeen," he said as two men, one supporting the other, weaved a slightly unsteady way out of the station heading for the horse-drawn cart.

The steadier one heaved his companion up onto the seat of the cart and turned to the group standing there.

"Ye look sort o' lost," he commented. "Whaur are ye goin'?"

Scott took one look at the incomprehension on Kirk's face and answered. "We've... er... been transferred tae Orkney. We need the Inverness train."

"Weel, ye'll nae find it oot here. Ye'll hae tae gang through yonder into the station itsel'. The station master's office is just through there. He'll be able tae tell ye when the next train for Inverness is."

"Thanks," Scott said. "Come on, lads. This way."

As Kirk hoisted his kitbag onto his shoulder he noticed McCoy was with them and felt himself breathe a sigh of relief, remembering how, back in 1942, McCoy had not arrived with the rest of the party but had turned up a day later, grumbling loudly about having all his atoms rearranged.

They made their way into the station through a large close which opened out into a big compound with platforms for the trains to pull into, here, there and everywhere. Kirk looked round and could see nothing to tell them where to go for the Inverness train; he decided that he had indeed better speak to the station master.

He found the elderly official behind a hatch in the wall of the big building that stretched from one end of the station to the other.

"Excuse me," he said, "which is the platform for the Inverness train?"

"Platform 4," the station master informed him. He looked Kirk up and down. "Gaun tae Orkney, are ye?"

Kirk wasn't quite sure what the question was, but he did make out the word 'Orkney' and nodded. "Yes. I understand we have to change at Inverness?"

"Aye." He thought for a moment. "There's a train for Inverness in half an hour, but ye'd hae over five hours tae wait there for yer connection, and it's a long, cold journey and a cold, cold place tae hae tae wait. Ye'd be better tae wait here and get

the next train - that's at 11.30. Ye'll still have an hour tae wait in Inverness, mind ye, but that'll no' be as bad as five.

"Why not go up the road and get yersels something tae read - go oot o' the station, turn left across the road, up the wee street and ye'll find a paper shop. By the time ye get back the tea lady'll be in and ye can hae a nice cup o' tea in the waiting room."

Kirk glanced at the others to see four heads nodding agreement, although Scott's was the only one showing complete comprehension, and turned back to the station master. "That sounds fine. Thanks. Oh - can we leave these kitbags somewhere?"

"Weel, the office doesna' rightly open till 9 am... but ach, ye're in the forces. I'll tak' them in here wi' me. It's the least I can do for you young lads. I tried tae join up, ye ken - I was in the navy in the Great War, and wanted tae do ma bit in this one - but they wouldna' hae me. Too auld, they said. Too auld, and me just saxty-two! I can still show some o' you youngsters a thing or two." He sounded ever so slightly defensive, as if he half expected to be laughed at, but Kirk could admire the man's spirit and treated the comment seriously.

"I'm sure you can, sir," he replied gravely and with complete sincerity.

By the time the Enterprise men had visited the newsagents, bought a selection of newspapers and a book each from a not-very-extensive choice of westerns and whodunnits, and returned to the station, the stationmaster had lit a fire in the waiting room and had it roaring up the chimney in cheerful defiance of a railway directive that fires, if lit at all, should be kept small. He was of the fixed opinion that Inverness - let alone Orkney - was part of the Arctic, and was determined that this polite young officer and his men would spend their last hours in a civilised climate with every comfort he could devise. So they waited for their train beside a welcome fire, refreshed at half hourly intervals by more tea, and were finally escorted to their train by the stationmaster in person.

He remained standing on the platform gazing after the departed train for several minutes, remembering Orkney in the winter of 1917. At last he turned and went back to his office. All he could do for them now was wish them well.

The troop train from Inverness pulled into Thurso station, loaded to the gunwhales with military personnel en route for the islands.

Kirk was tired and aching from head to toe. He had mentioned it to McCoy while they waited in growing discomfort at Inverness for the train, but McCoy had assured him it was only due to the shaking and noise and cold on the train. They had grown colder and colder as they waited, and Kirk, who had originally suspected the Aberdeen stationmaster of exaggerating the horrors of Inverness station, began to realise that the man hadn't told them the half of it. Inverness station was cold and draughty, the waiting room was locked, there were no refreshments available and the one elderly porter in sight looked too feeble to carry himself, let alone help

anyone with their luggage.

The train, when it arrived from Perth, was already crowded and desperately uncomfortable. All that could be said in its favour was that because it was so crowded it was at least a little warmer than the Aberdeen-Inverness train.

When it stopped, all the doors flew open and men with kitbags flowed onto the platform like a khaki-green sea. The five 'naval' officers were swept along with the flow of the Human tide towards the checkpoints, where all their orders and papers were checked and cleared, much to the Captain's relief. Not that he had had any serious doubts about the Guardian's competence when it came to providing them with foolproof forgeries, but it was still a relief to be safely past this check. It would have been a terrible anti-climax if they were arrested and sent to prison on a charge of spying, and the Guardian had been forced to rescue them.

They were instructed to board one of the buses waiting outside to take them on by road to the Orkney ferry.

"Will we ever get there?" Tyson moaned as he clambered aboard the bus - echoing the sentiments of nearly all the men from the train.

"Aye. It only takes about an hour to Scrabster from here, laddie," Scott replied cheerfully as he stepped onto the bus.

"How long after that, Scotty?" McCoy asked. He, too, was beginning to ache.

"That depends on the weather. Probably two to three hours on the boat."

"Four more hours at the outside, lads." Aware that he was the senior officer present, Kirk spoke loudly as he settled his kitbag into the baggage net above the seats. It was up to him to maintain morale as far as possible.

"A lifetime!" came from one of the army boys towards the back of the bus. "That was the longest railway journey of my life!"

"Commander? How come you and your officers are going by rail and road?" another asked. "I'd have thought navy personnel would sail in."

"There are no ships going to Scapa at the moment," Kirk replied. "So - we had to come the hard way." He settled down into the seat of the bus.

"Couldn't they fly you up, sir?"

"They could have," Kirk said, allowing a wry note to creep into his voice. "However, the powers that be decided that since arrangements had already been made for the troop train and a special sailing of the ferry, it would be easier - to say nothing of cheaper - to squeeze us onto the train."

The Royal Mail Ship St. Ola was at her berth, patiently awaiting for yet another load of military personnel to embark.

Along with most of the merchant fleet, she had been commandeered by the Royal Navy on August 26 1939 and, along with the steamer St. Ninian, turned into a troopship for the Pentland Firth crossing to Orkney.

"Don't look down," Kirk ordered as he stepped out onto the plank that was acting as a gangway. There was nothing but water under them.

"I feel seasick already," McCoy moaned as he did look down into the grey sea.

"I said 'don't look down'!" Kirk repeated.

"Never mind, Leonard, I'll gie ye a swig o' ma flask once we get aboard," Scott promised.

The St. Ola's First Officer was at the end of the plank waiting for the naval officers to board. Once they stepped aboard they could feel the movement of the ferry under their feet, even although she was still tied up at her berth. They knew this was due to the two currents that made the Pentland Firth one of the most fearsome crossings around; indeed, the junction of these two currents - where the warm Gulf Stream crossing the Atlantic met the ice currents travelling south from the Arctic - caused the whirlpools and eddies that made the six miles of the Firth one of the most dangerous straits in the world.

Kirk's thoughts were interrupted by the Ola's First Officer.

"Commander Kirk?"

"Yes," Kirk replied, looking at the insignia on the officer's duffle coat shoulders.

"You and your officers are requested to join our Captain in his quarters. This way, please."

"Thanks... er... ?"

"The name's Bob Croy, First Officer, sir," he told him as he led the way into the ship's interior.

"Yes, I could see that, but in the Royal Navy we call them Number Ones. I wasn't sure if you did the same in the Merchant Fleet," Kirk explained as they followed the First Officer up a flight of steep stairs and along a corridor through open bulkhead doors.

"No, not on this boat, sir, it's usually first name terms except with the skipper - that is, the officers call him by his first name, but the crew call him just plain Skipper. We all know our jobs and get on with them. There's not a lot of call for discipline here; orders are given and followed." He came to a stop outside a door that faced another set of steep stairs. He knocked on the door and waited.

"Come," came the reply.

The First Officer entered, followed by Kirk and his men. The

Captain sat beside a desk that was securely fixed to the metal floor as was the chair he sat in. There was no other furniture except a built-in bed with two drawers under it on the left-hand bulkhead, and on the seaward one a couch that Kirk guessed converted into a day bed.

"Come in and find a seat, gentlemen," the ship's Captain said. "I'm Bill McDonald."

"Pleased to meet you, Captain," Kirk replied. "I'm Commander James Kirk of... Naval Intelligence." Oops, he thought; from long habit he had nearly said 'Enterprise'. "This is my team - Ship's Doctor McCoy, Lieutenants Scott, Tyson and Keller. I take it, Captain, you have been told why we're here?" He sat on the narrow couch which he suspected folded down into a day bed.

"Aye, I do know, Commander. I've had to supply the military with all my passenger lists for the whole of 1939. I take it ye're looking for someone in particular?"

"We're acting on information received. I'm sorry, that's all I can tell you."

"You're acting under orders, just like I am. There's no need for ye to apologise. Now, we'll be under way in ten minutes. Would ye like something tae warm ye up? The train journey's no' sae bad till ye hit Dundee or Perth, depending on your route, but from there on it just gets colder; and it's a long, cold journey from Aberdeen to here, as well I know. Whit would ye like? A plate o' soup or a peedie drink o' Scottish nectar?" He glanced round them, wearing a slightly mischievous expression which widened into a grin as he noticed the look on Scott's face. "A true Scot, I take it. Whisky for ye?"

"Aye, please. A malt if ye have it."

"Whit kind? We've - Bob, what malts are there in the mess?"

"Glenfiddich, Glen Garry or Glen Grant."

"Glenfiddich, please," Scott replied.

McCoy nodded. "Could I have the same, please?"

"Commander Kirk? What would you like?" Bob Croy asked.

"I'll have the same, please."

Kirk was studying the First Officer carefully. Something about him made the Starfleet officer uneasy. There was something odd about him; maybe it was just the way he looked at the 'naval' officers. Perhaps he was just too smart for his own good... but Kirk had the feeling that he was being tried out. He made a mental note to guard his tongue even more warily while he was around this man. He glanced down at himself to make sure his dark navy uniform was in order.

"Commander Kirk? Commander!" The St. Ola's Captain had spoken again. Kirk shook his head as he looked up, belatedly realising that he was being spoken to. "Commander, are you all right?"

"Jim?" McCoy asked.

"I'm fine," Kirk responded automatically. "Just tired after the train journey. It was a long way... I'm sorry, Captain, what were you saying?" A quick glance round to see how Croy was reacting to his lack of attention showed him that the First Officer had left the cabin without his being aware of it. Had he actually fallen asleep for a brief moment?

"I asked what ship you served on before you were transferred to Naval Intelligence."

"Oh. The Ark Royal." It dawned on Kirk then that the Guardian had indeed added a new element to the Time Portal; it had planted, deep in their subconscious, all the information they would need on this trip. For the first time he realised that they were much better prepared this time than they were on their previous trip into years of the Second World War.

"The aircraft carrier?"

"That's right."

"Well, Commander, you'll find the St. Ola's a different kettle of fish to that big craft ye're used to."

Kirk had noticed a photo lying on the captain's desk, and realised that that was the safest method of changing the subject. He picked it up.

"Is this your family?"

"Yes. My wife Fiona, my son Jamie, and my three lovely daughters, Flora, Ann and Kirsty. Have you any family, Commander?"

"No. My wife died - an accident - while she was expecting our first child." Kirk lapsed into silence as he remembered Miramane. If she had lived, she would never have been able to adjust to a life away from her own world, never have been able to understand even a fraction of what constituted his, and he would have had to leave her behind; but he still remembered her with affection.

"Oh. I'm sorry - I didn't know..." McDonald felt a little awkward in the face of this personal tragedy.

Snapping out of the past, Kirk managed a smile as he replied, "How could you have known? It's a while ago now, and life has to go on."

McDonald was saved from trying to reply as the ship suddenly came alive. Her thrusters manoeuvred her away from the pierside and her engines started to turn slowly over. "Ah - we're on our way." Kirk realised that during his brief snooze McDonald must have ordered Croy to take the St. Ola out, since he was involved with the Naval officer.

All eyes turned at the sound of the cabin door opening. In the doorway stood a young woman in her twenties, a young woman who was obviously one of the girls in the photo on the Captain's desk but, older now, was more beautiful even than the promise that showed in the photo.

"My daughter Flora." Captain McDonald introduced her. "She's on her way home; her mother and I thought it would be better if she stayed in Orkney until after the war."

"Were you working?" McCoy asked her. Surely it wasn't been that easy for anyone of age to be in the forces to move, as a civilian, to another part of the country?

"Yes and no. I have just completed my final year of medical training. Normally I'd have gone on and done a spell in a hospital in Glasgow, but there's a vacancy in the hospital in Kirkwall as well as a need for a general practitioner, and I know my mother will be happier if I'm safely there."

"So you're a qualified doctor."

"Yes. I see you're a ship's surgeon?"

"That's right."

"But you're not British, are you?"

"No, I'm not, Miss McDonald, but I'm a British subject, so I'm serving in His Majesty's Navy."

"It makes me feel terribly old when someone calls me 'Miss McDonald'. Please, it's Flora."

Spock had returned to the Enterprise. He was uneasy, but then he always was when he had to remain behind. Silently he made his way up to the bridge, where he relieved Sulu and assumed command.

There was nothing he could do now but wait. He did not know how long the mission would last nor how long his Captain would be away. Time passes at different rates in different dimensions; it might take Kirk a day in real time, it might take a week.

"Sir, do you think they will manage?" Chekov asked.

"I do not know, Mr. Chekov," Spock replied as the turbolift doors swished open. He turned his attention to the new arrival. "Is that the medical supply check list, Nurse?"

"Yes, Mr. Spock," Chapel replied. "Sir, I can't account for all the items that seem to have been used."

"I would not worry too much, Nurse. I take it you are missing a field medical kit and a few other small items?"

"Why, yes, Mr. Spock. How did you know?"

"A logical assumption, Nurse Chapel. I think our Chief Medical Officer may have taken some... insurance... with him."

The steamer St. Ola made her way round the Point of Ness and edged into her berth at Stromness. The night should have been pitch dark, but the sky was ablaze with the Merry Dancers.

There was no wind, and the sea here was flat calm, in complete contrast to the miles they had just sailed. McCoy was decidedly green as, with the other Enterprise men, he picked his way down the gangplank onto dry land.

"You'll be looking for the military HQ," McDonald said to Kirk before they disembarked. "Flora is going right past it on her way home, so she can show you where it is. I'd show ye myself but I've still a lot to do before I can hand over the watch."

Kirk nodded his thanks.

Aware of how little he really knew about this era, he had spent most of the six-mile crossing talking to the young woman about the islands and her people and customs, and felt more comfortable about the whole mission. This would give him a few more minutes, he hoped, to learn a little more.

He had less time than he had hoped. Flora McDonald led them along the quayside and into the main street. Mackay's Hotel* (as the locals still referred to it) was being used as the HQ, and it was only around 150 yards from the ship.

"Well, this is it, gentlemen," Flora said as she stopped at the foot of the four large stone steps that led up to the four-storey building. *MACKAY'S HOTEL* was still boldly splashed in capitals above the doors.

"My thanks, Flora. Do you have far to go?" Kirk asked, not liking the idea of allowing the young lady to walk on on her own.

"No, and anyway here's my escort, my brother Jamie, coming down the road. He'll have heard the Ola coming in and come down for me." She sighed. "Before the war we'd never heard of crime here. Oh, well, I got used to the idea of it while I was in Glasgow. Good luck, Commander. Perhaps we'll meet again." With that she left them standing at the foot of the steps and ran towards her brother. They hugged, briefly but warmly, then headed off up the street.

The small group of ersatz Naval officers gathered up their belongings and climbed the steps of the hotel. Once inside they reported to the reception desk which was, logically, still being used as a reception area. After their documents were examined their names were checked off on the 'arrivals' list. Kirk was informed that the Admiral wished to see him as soon as possible; a young seaman took his kitbag and led them up the stairs.

The others were left in the bar - where the stock of liquor was notable by its scarcity - while Kirk was led into the lounge bar where he was introduced to the Admiral. "Commander Kirk, sir," the seaman said.

"Ah, Kirk. What will you have, man?"

Kirk glanced at the display behind the bar and decided that it was slightly more generous than the stock in the 'other ranks' bar. "Scotch, please, sir."

"Anything in it?" When Kirk shook his head, he went on, "Make that two. Bring them through to my office," the Admiral ordered as he rose.

He led Kirk through the back of the bar to a door on the left that led into a long corridor. The rooms - *probably bedrooms*

*Mackay's Hotel. This building is still there but is now known as Stromness Hotel.

originally, Kirk thought - were now clearly used as offices. The Admiral's was at the far end.

Once inside, he waved Kirk to a seat and moved round the desk to his own chair. "You have been told why you've been sent here?"

"Yes, sir. The Royal Oak."

The Admiral nodded. "We don't as yet know the total loss of life, nor if it was an onboard explosion or... what."

"What is the possibility of U-boat attack?" Kirk questioned.

"That possibility can't be ruled out as yet," the Admiral admitted. "However, a U-boat would be well on its way home by now."

"Maybe not. There are plenty of leas where one could hide waiting for another chance to strike."

"And I can't really see how a U-boat would manage to penetrate the Flow. However, I have already ordered an all-round watch and patrol, Commander, just in case. It's come up with nothing."

Kirk grunted. "Just a thought. Admiral, my men are here to do a job, and that's what we intend to do. Whitehall suspects a German infiltrator is on the Islands, and wants a full report on anything - anything at all - that might be considered in any way suspicious behaviour on the part of anyone. I myself have a very strong feeling that the two - the Royal Oak and this infiltrator - are connected in some way... and my 'feelings' are usually spot on - " He broke off at the knock on the door that signalled the arrival of the drinks.

"Will that be all, sir?" the barman asked as he put the tray down on the desk.

"Yes, thank you."

As the door closed again behind the barman, the Admiral handed a glass to Kirk and went on. "Where do you want to start, Commander?"

"With a complete list of 1939 arrivals and departures on the ferries. I understand you have already obtained these." He grinned at the look on the Admiral's face. "I haven't been idle, sir."

"So I see. And after that?"

"You have divers going down to the Royal Oak?"

"They're organised. We had to send for some from mainland Britain. They'll be arriving tomorrow."

"I'll need to see their reports as soon as possible."

"Of course. Well, here's to the success of your mission, Commander." He held up his glass.

Kirk lifted his glass in acknowledgement.

"You'll find everyone on the Islands very helpful," the Admiral continued. "Most are still stunned by what's happened, but there's anger as well that such a thing could happen here. The Islanders

feel their integrity has been damaged."

Kirk sipped his drink. "I believe there was some delay in your receiving a signal from the Flow."

"That's right. I was not informed until one and a half hours after she sank. I haven't been able to discover any reason for the delay, but I suspect the situation was one of pure chaos, with everyone trying to rescue as many of the Oak's crew as possible."

"Ah, yes, the survivors. I'd like to send my medical officer to the Hospital ship to have a word with them."

"You mean MHS Abba?"

"Yes, sir, I mean the Abba. Dr. McCoy is more qualified than I am to question the survivors."

"Yes. Yes, of course. Someone has to see if they know anything. I'll arrange that, Commander. Anything else?"

"Not at the moment, sir."

"Right, then. I'll see to everything necessary tonight, Commander. I'll be tied up all tomorrow at the Scapa cemetery."

"The burial of the dead?"

"The ones we've recovered." The Admiral swallowed half his drink. "There will be a Board of Enquiry, I take it?"

"Yes, sir. My ground reports will be passed on, along with any recommendations I have. I'll be too busy myself to attend the burials, but I'll send Lieutenants Keller and Tyson to represent Naval Intelligence." He finished his drink.

The Admiral nodded and tossed back the last of his. "If you've finished your drink, Commander, I'll show you to your office."

The following morning found Kirk standing solemnly on the steps of the Military HQ, waiting for McCoy and Scott.

"Commander, your devotion to duty does you credit."

Flora McDonald's voice cut into his thoughts. She went on, "But I wonder if it's the war that makes you so serious or if it's just the natural you?"

"Miss McDonald! What brings you here at such an early hour?" Kirk asked as McCoy and Scott came out of the swing doors.

"I'm on my way to offer my services to the military," she explained as Kirk held the door open for her.

"I thought you had a job waiting in Kirkwall?" McCoy asked.

"I did, but apparently there's to be a field hospital on the outskirts of Stromness, and it'll need staff. Kirkwall is willing to release me for it."

"Oh," McCoy responded. It was then that he noticed the way



Kirk was looking at the girl. "Jim, the boat's waiting." His voice cut into Kirk's thoughts.

"What?" With an effort, Kirk pulled his attention away from Flora McDonald.

"I said, we have a job to do and the boat's waiting."

"Yes, you do, and I have to hurry - I have an appointment with the Admiral Commanding Orkney and Shetland - " Flora's voice literally sounded the capitals - "before he leaves for Scapa this morning." She waved and disappeared through the open door.

The three officers made their way down the stone steps onto the street. It was only a short walk to the small harbour and their waiting transport - a small fishing vessel. Most of Orkney's small boats were making a few extra pounds running back and forth between the Fleet and shore. Gingerly, the three climbed down the steel ladders attached to the harbour wall and dropped onto the deck of the small vessel. The boat's skipper led them inside the tiny wheelhouse.

"Remind me - "

"Bones, don't start." Kirk sounded a little discouraged as the little vessel made its way out of the harbour mouth and into the still, calm waters of Orkney and Shetland. Despite the calm the little boat rose and fell as she hit the currents and waves head on.

"Feeling a bit green, Doc?" the skipper asked as he held his pride and joy steadily on course.

"Sort of," McCoy replied, wishing he hadn't had such a hearty breakfast of bacon and eggs. (Despite the rationing, there was no food shortage on Orkney; the Islands were close to being self sufficient in farm produce.)

"Aye, it's no' like yer big ship, is it?"

"No," Jim Kirk answered, thinking of the Enterprise.

"That's right. Even though it's calm ye can still feel her rolling with the motion," the skipper informed them, a note of satisfaction in his voice.

Scott nodded. "Ye don't feel the motion the same on the bigger vessels," he agreed. The motion of the ship wasn't bothering him in the least; in fact, Lieutenant Commander Scott was thoroughly enjoying himself.

The journey couldn't have ended too soon for Dr. McCoy, and the only thing spoiling his appreciation of the stability of the Abba was the realisation that in a few hours he would have to make the trip back to dry land. He wasn't too happy with the long climb up the rope ladder onto the Abba's deck, either - but at least he had managed to keep his breakfast down.

Once McCoy was safely aboard the Abba the skipper of the little vessel turned his boat across the Flow towards Scapa Bay and the Royal Oak's last resting place.

"She turned turtle?" Scott asked as the fishing boat crew closer.

"Aye. If you want my opinion," the skipper said in the tones of one who enjoyed a good gossip, "she was sabotaged."

"Did you see her go down?" Kirk asked, wrinkling his nose at the foul smell of fuel oil that still hung in the air.

"No. I'd been out fishing, and got in about three hours after it happened. She was already bottom up, and with fuel oil everywhere. All the wee boats were out, looking for survivors. I didna' think we'd find any by then, though we all went on looking for several more hours. As it happened, we did pick up a couple hanging on to planks of wood. Going by what they said... "

"What was that?" Kirk asked as the skipper fell silent, concentrating on steering his vessel through a slick of the thick black greasy oil that clung round the grave of the stricken ship like a black blanket.

"Several internal explosions."

"Did they say from what part of the ship?" Scott asked.

"One said he'd seen an orange-red flash coming from the starboard aft, the other said he'd heard four explosions at about half second intervals, forward and aft."

"So you think it was sabotage."

"That I do."

"You don't think a sub could have crept in during the night?" Kirk asked.

"Anything's possible, though if I was the Captain o' a sub I wouldna' chance it, what wi' the block ships and the tidal race... No, I wouldna' attempt it, and I've been sailing these waters for twenty years now." He hesitated, then admitted, "But the St. Ola regularly goes round the end o' the booms rather than wait for the gates to open."

"How deep is it?" Scott asked.

"Around fifteen fathoms," the skipper replied.

Kirk looked down at the oily surface of the water. "All right, Skipper, we aren't going to see anything but an oil slick from here; we'll have to go down. Take us back to Stromness. We'll need to get diving equipment."

"I can tak' ye back, sir, but ye'll need to dive from one o' the Navy ships. I've no' the equipment on this boat to let you dive from it, and I wouldn't like to have it on my conscience if anything went wrong."

"That's all right. I doubt we'll be going down before tomorrow anyway - assuming we can get permission to go down."

"Ye'll be wanting to pick up yer mate?" The skipper swung his boat round to head back towards the Abba.

"No. I don't know how long he'll be. The ship's launch will bring him back once he's finished."

"So it's straight back to Stromness, then."

"That's right, Skipper."

Kirk had no sooner spoken when all the ships anchored in the Flow started to sound the wail of an air raid warning. The noise of aeroplane engines could be heard high above, as could the distinctive whine of bombs dropping.

"I'll need to make a run for it!" the skipper shouted. "We won't stand a chance if we're hit; we'll end up as firewood. Hold tight!"

The Germans didn't bomb the hospital ship McCoy was on, but they started their run using her as a shield against the guns on the British ships.

The bombs dropped. Two of the attacking Heinkels dived to roughly seven hundred feet and dropped four bombs around the Iron Duke. Then the planes soared up higher and they all banked and flew away.

Aboard the Abba, McCoy helped the male nurse persuade the terrified survivors of the Royal Oak to stay in their bunks while they closed the portholes in a probably vain attempt to keep air pockets in the vessel. But even after the drone of aircraft engines had faded, many of the men kept trying to struggle up and get lifejackets on.

"Nurse, a word," McCoy said, giving up on trying to calm a man who was unashamedly sobbing with terror. He led the way into the corridor.

"Doctor?"

"These men shouldn't be here. They should be on dry land, preferably on an extended home leave, and eventually most should be either invalided out of the Navy or assigned to a shore posting."

"Yes, sir, I know, but the Admiralty... "

"Will get the rough side of my tongue if they don't see sense! These are men, not machines! It's inhuman to expect them to make any sort of recovery while they're still exposed to the risk of being sunk again. Where can I get a telephone?"

"Try the radio room, sir. That way." He looked approvingly after McCoy as the Doctor headed purposefully down the corridor.

By the time McCoy found the radio room, the Captain of the Oak was already on the ship to shore line to the Admiral Commanding Orkney and Shetland. Even in the seriousness of the current situation McCoy mentally heard Flora McDonald's irreverent voice capitalising the title, and grinned slightly.

"Sir, the Iron Duke is listing twenty-five degrees to port."

Frankly, my men can't take any more. Over."

McCoy gestured that he would like a word with the Admiral, and the Captain nodded.

"I know, Captain. Anything else? Over." The Admiral's voice came over the speakers.

"Sir, the Naval Intelligence surgeon wishes a word. Over." He handed the hand set, set on the 'receive' mode, to McCoy. "Perhaps you'll have more luck," he muttered. "I'm getting nowhere."

"Put him on. Over."

McCoy pressed the 'transmit' button. "Dr. McCoy, sir, attached to Commander Kirk's team. Sir, these men are in a terrible state; many are close to a nervous breakdown - the raid a few minutes ago was the last straw. They should be moved to dry land as soon as possible - preferably on mainland Scotland. It would be best for them to be sent home on an extended sick leave, though I realise that for security reasons that may not be immediately possible. I would certainly recommend, however, that they be put on the first available train from Thurso and sent a minimum of four or five hundred miles south." There was a very brief silence before he remembered to say, "Over," and flick the handset to 'receive'.

"I'll see what I can do, Doctor. Over."

"Sir, this is a medical priority. Over."

"I realise that, Doctor, but even I have to answer to the Admiralty. They may not agree. Over."

"Admiral, rank hath its privileges. What's the point of being an Admiral if you can't occasionally push through something that you know is right?" McCoy's voice was beginning to sound distinctly annoyed. "Over."

"Very well, Doctor. Perhaps you are right. You will be reporting this conversation to your own superiors? Over."

The cunning so-and-so is covering himself by getting the medical authorities to back him up! McCoy thought. *Well, it's no skin off my nose to agree. Anything to get those men to a less stressful situation.* "Yes, sir. Over."

"Very well. Prepare the men for their journey. I'll arrange something. Over."

"Thank you, sir. Will you inform Commander Kirk of these developments? Over."

"Certainly. Out."

That was an easy one for him, McCoy thought as he gave the handset back to the Captain. *It gets Naval Intelligence to back him as well.*

"Thanks," the Captain said feelingly. "It might make all the difference to getting at least some of those men their nerve back. If they were left here, subject to more raids..."

"I know," McCoy replied. He had once seen something similar in

his own century. "Some of them might eventually recover, though it would take longer than if they were removed from the source of danger; but for some it could have meant a permanent nervous breakdown. Men weren't made to take this sort of long-term nervous strain. The world can do without blasted warmongering little men with delusions of grandeur!"

It was a good job the Admiralty tug St. Martin was steaming near the Iron Duke and managed to get a line aboard her to give her a tow to Ore Bay. There she was successfully beached, and thanks to that there were few casualties - only twenty-five injured - to add to the too-long list from the Royal Oak. The Destroyer Eskimo moved in alongside the Duke, providing her with pumps as her own generators were out of action.

It was wasted effort. At approximately 1.45 pm the second wave of German bombers came over the Flow, staying high - 16000 - 18000 feet. The 226 HAA battery guns at Lyness opened up, as did those on the ships, but the Eskimo had to leave the Iron Duke to her fate.

By 2.30 the enemy planes had gone, the all clear was sounded and the gun teams were stood down.

Kirk was glad to get his feet on dry land again. Even so, he could still feel the motion of the boat as he made his way with Scott along the quayside to the hotel, where Tyson and Keller were already back, standing around the foyer and making the place look untidy.

"Right, you two." Kirk gathered up his two lieutenants as soon as he entered the hotel.

"Sir?"

"My office," Kirk ordered as he headed through the bar, removing his duffle coat. A young ensign handed him a piece of paper as he reached the door. He nodded and went quickly along the corridor.

Once the door of his office was firmly closed, Kirk read his message as he seated himself behind his desk.

He glanced up at the others. "Dr. McCoy is all right. He is remaining aboard the hospital ship for the moment. I don't know about you, Scotty, but I could do with a drink." He lifted the telephone on his desk and dialled the number for the bar.

"Aye, it was hairy," Scott was telling the other two. "There we were, stuck out in the middle of Scapa Flow wi' bombs dropping around our lugs - "

"'Lugs', Scotty?" Kirk asked.

"Oh. Ears, sir."

"Ah. Yes, bar, Commander Kirk here. Could you spare a whole bottle of Scotch? Yes? Right, bring it along to my office together with four glasses. Just put it on my mess bill." He replaced the receiver and turned back to the others.

Scott was still regaling the others with his tale. "If the turbulence had hit the boat she would have splintered into firewood."

He was interrupted again by a knock on the door.

"Come," Kirk called.

The barman entered with his order. Kirk signed his name to the chit and the barman left, closing the door behind him.

"All right," he said. "Did you two find out anything?"

"Not really, sir. Stores were shipped out to the Oak that day from Scapa Pier," Tyson said.

"What's so strange in that?" Kirk asked as he poured out the drinks and handed them round.

"On the face of it, nothing. The stores were hoisted aboard from a boat and taken below," Keller added.

"So?"

"It wasn't a regular store ship."

"I see." Kirk thought about that for a few moments.

"Sir, if it wasn't a regular supply ship, what did it deliver to the Oak? One or two of the survivors who were at the burials were muttering about it. Could there have been high explosive in the crates?"

"That's the second sabotage theory today," Scott commented. He tossed back his whisky.

"That may well be, but we already know what happened and this is only ground work before we can find Wiseman," Kirk reminded them. "I had hoped he might turn up at the burials, if only to gloat... However, let's not get side-tracked. The official report has to stand, no matter what we find, or history will be changed. There's no way we can allow that to happen. Understand?" Kirk kept his voice very low.

"Yes, sir."

"So we get this report written - slowly - to give us time to find Wiseman. Right, you two. Here are the ferry arrivals and passenger lists for 1939. Go over them with a fine tooth comb. Cross reference them with departures, and try to track down an address for any male remaining on the island."

"Without the ship's computer, you mean?" Keller asked.

"Sir, that could take days!" Tyson complained.

"We don't have the ship's computer, do we?" Kirk asked sweetly. "It will have to be done manually - so the sooner you start, the faster you'll get finished."

"Yes, sir," they replied in unison.

"And for heaven's sake don't go on about computers outside this

room! Remember we're in the first half of the twentieth century, not the twenty-third!"

"Yes, sir. Sorry, sir."

"Now, have you had a chance to get any dinner?"

"Yes, sir," Keller responded.

"Right - then you'd better make a start in here while Mr. Scott and I go and eat."

After dinner, Kirk went to see the Admiral. He found him in his office, buried in paperwork.

"Come in, Kirk, don't just stand there letting the cold in."

"Sorry, sir," Kirk apologised as he closed the door.

"Now, what did you want to see me about?"

"Would it be possible for Lt. Scott to join the divers going down to the Royal Oak?"

"Is he a registered Naval diver?" the Admiral asked.

"No, sir." *But he's had plenty of experience walking in space... and it can't be that different.*

"Then the answer has to be no, Kirk. Rules, I'm afraid - they just don't allow it. Oh, I don't deny rules can sometimes be broken, but not when a man's safety might depend on them."

"I thought that would be your answer, sir."

"Playing by the book, eh, Kirk?"

"This time, sir."

"But not always? Like your Doctor out there?" He nodded towards the Flow. "He practically blackmailed me into ordering the Oak casualties off Orkney and back to mainland Britain."

Kirk grinned. "Yes, McCoy would do that. He's one of the best."

"Anything else? No? Then please leave me in peace with this little lot - and my headache. Oh - I don't suppose you've heard. The Germans sent a rec. plane over about half an hour ago. Surveying the damage, I suppose."

"Does that mean we can expect another raid tomorrow, sir?"

"Probably," the Admiral growled pessimistically.

Kirk pushed the thought to the back of his mind as he headed out through the main doors of the military HQ and out into the relative quiet of the Stromness street. 'Relative', because the RMS St. Ola was blasting her horn to let the township know she had arrived home safely once again.

The Captain made his way down to the harbour, his mind on Starfleet business. Where the hell was Wiseman hiding? He had to be somewhere on the Islands! But then again the Islands covered a large area; he could be anywhere.

It was then that he realised the Ferry's horn was still belting away, drawing the townsfolk to the harbour.

"Something's up!" someone hurrying past him said.

"What do you mean?" Kirk ran to catch up.

"Well, the Ola doesn't blow like that unless something has happened. And she's almost an hour late in berthing!" the Orcadian informed him as he came to a stop on the North Pier.

"The weather... ?" Kirk suggested tentatively as he shivered slightly in the cold wind.

The Orcadian looked at the choppy water. "Near enough flat calm," he said with the assurance of one for whom the sea was a well-known neighbour. Kirk glanced at him with a faint awareness of having made a foolish suggestion and that only the Orcadian's politeness prevented him from saying so.

Slowly the St. Ola glided into her berth and was tied fast.

"Told you!" the man said as the town's one and only police constable walked onto the Pier. A moment later, Bob Croy appeared; he started down the gangway, noticed Kirk and beckoned him forward to join the policeman.

"The Captain would like to see you, sir." Mystified, Kirk followed the policeman and the St. Ola's First Officer back on board.

Captain McDonald was waiting in his cabin, standing with his hands firmly clasped behind his back.

"Commander," he greeted Kirk. "Andy."

"Well, Bill, what's the problem?" the policeman asked as he accepted the drink Bob Croy handed him.

"I've got a body for ye. Commander, it seemed tae me that the forces might be interested in this too - I'd as soon include someone in military authority right from the start, as it were, and you did ask to be informed of anything unusual that happened."

Kirk nodded as he took his drink. "Yes, I did," he commented.

McDonald nodded. "The Northern Star pulled it up in her nets."

"Donny Rendall's boat," the policeman commented.

"Aye. He didna' want to pack up and come back intae harbour just this soon, so he signalled us and we took it on board."

"In our opinion, it's murder," Bob Croy cut in.

"Murder? What makes you think that?" Kirk asked.

"Well, you don't break your own neck then tie a weight around it and jump overboard!" Croy responded.

"Bob, that's enough," McDonald intervened.

"Have you any idea who it might be?" Kirk asked.

"No. The body's no' a pretty sight. It is male, but that's about all we can tell. It's been in the water for quite some time - the fish have eaten quite a bit o't. The odd thing is, the body was loosely wrapped in a canvas sheet that had the St. Ola's name on it. We havena' lost any crew - or passengers - so it's unexplainable." McDonald scratched his head.

"That means we have a murderer on the Islands," the police constable said uneasily.

"Could the canvas have been obtained anywhere other than this ship?" Kirk asked.

"Unlikely, Commander."

"And the body had no identification at all?" Kirk's mind was working in top gear. This had to be the answer - Wiseman must have killed someone and taken his identity - which meant he must have looked enough like his victim to pass himself off as the dead man. It was slightly risky, of course, for Wiseman would not know any of the dead man's friends or relatives and might make a slip that would create suspicion, but just turning up in the Islands, as a stranger, would be even more risky - Kirk had been there long enough to realise that a stranger would be very readily noticed. He wasn't sure what to do with the information, but this was their first real lead. "And what will happen to the body?"

"I'll have to take it to the morgue and get a doctor to do a post mortem on it," the policeman said. "Just maybe there'll be enough left to give us an idea of who it was." There was a note of distaste in his voice. In the Islands, murder was almost unknown, but he sometimes had to deal with drowning accidents, and he hated dealing with decomposing bodies.

"Would it be possible for my Doctor to do the post mortem?" Kirk asked.

"I don't see why not," the policeman said. "It's no job for a woman."

"You don't mean to say that you were considering asking my daughter, were you, Andy?" Bill McDonald demanded.

"Over my dead body!" Bob Croy protested as well. "There's no way Flora will be getting near it. It's grotesque!"

"Flora is the only civilian Doctor in Stromness," the policeman said grimly.

"There's Johnston - "

"He died this afternoon of a heart attack. He was on his rounds, he'd just left a patient, and half way to the gate he collapsed." The policeman shrugged.

"Then I think that settles it," Kirk said. "Dr. McCoy will

carry out the post mortem. If Flora wants to be present as well, that's her prerogative. Now, may we see the body?"

Jim Kirk had seen death many times, and the ugliness of sudden and unnatural death had never held any haunting memories for him - until now. There was no way he could push to the back of his mind the picture of the half-eaten body of what had once been a living being. There was not much to see, but what there was was enough to make him want to part with his dinner over the side of the ship.

"I think it would be better if Dr. McCoy was to do the post mortem by himself, Captain," Kirk said eventually. There was no way he could submit a woman to looking at or possibly handling *that*.

"I'll arrange for the body to be moved," the policeman said. He glanced at Kirk. "You do understand that this is a police matter, Commander?"

"Yes, constable, I do. That's why I think you should be present at the post mortem," Kirk offered. He had to smile to himself as the policeman pulled a face at the suggestion.

"I am quite prepared to leave that to the Doctor, thank you, Commander," he replied.

The body was moved carefully to the converted church hall which had served as a soup kitchen in the First World War and was now transformed into a small hospital unit, having its kitchen area turned into an operating room.

Dr. Leonard McCoy stood over a large wooden kitchen table looking at the remains in front of him. The stench wasn't doing his upset stomach any good; in short, McCoy was still feeling very green and seasick.

"It's not very pretty, is it, Leonard?" Scott said from the doorway. The smell was literally getting up his nose.

"No, it's not..." He sighed. "I honestly don't know where to start."

"I'll leave you to it."

"Thanks," McCoy said to the closed door as it thudded heavily shut.

McCoy had just finished removing his green operating gown and run his hands under the hot tap when the door opened again to admit a slightly breathless Dr. McDonald.

"Are you finished?" she asked.

"Yes. Just."

"Sorry I didn't manage over to assist you. I was well told by everyone who thought he had the right to order me around that it was no job for a woman, but that wouldn't have stopped me. I stood in

at plenty PMs during my training. But you have no idea how genuinely busy I've been. Hospital or military Doctor? Huh. With Dr. Johnston dying the way he did, I'm the only civilian Doctor left here and I've become the Stromness general practitioner by default - there's nobody else. You'd think half the Island had deliberately saved up their ailments until now! Anyway, what did you find?"

"Nothing much." McCoy shook his head. "His neck was broken - a nice clean break, must have killed him instantly; the middle finger of his right hand had been cut off. Apart from water and fish damage, that was all." McCoy finished washing his hands and reached for a towel.

"So you agree that he was killed?"

"I don't think there's any doubt," McCoy said quietly, writing busily. "Of course, it could have been an accident and the body disposed of to try to save someone from being charged with murder - but in that case, I'd have expected a 'missing person' report to have been filed."

"How long had he been dead?"

"Hard to be sure - could be anything from a few weeks to a few months. The canvas cover could have protected it from the fish for a while. I'd guess at anything up to six months, though."

"I would like a copy of your report, Doctor, if that's possible."

"No problem." He put his pen down. "Now, I need a drink! Would you care to join me?" McCoy shouldered into his uniform jacket.

"I'd love to." Flora McDonald appreciated his attitude - professional, that of one doctor to another, rather than the chauvinistic view taken by her father, her father's First Officer, and McCoy's Commander that dealing with the aftermath of sudden and nasty death was no job for a woman. "But won't your Commander be waiting for your report?"

"No, he's gone off somewhere. Between one thing and another, this top brass that's coming up has got everyone kinda jumpy, so... I'll just pop this into Jim's office and he can read it at his leisure. I'll do you a copy tonight."

"Thanks. Top brass? The Board of Enquiry into the Royal Oak?"

"Yes."

"They'll be here the day after tomorrow. It's all over Stromness, you know." She grinned. "You can't keep things quiet in a place like this. Actually, it was Bob Croy who told me, before he went off duty. No doubt he'll be pi-eyed by now."

"Pi-eyed?" McCoy questioned.

"Drunk."

"Oh. Flora - what's he like?"

"Bob? He's all right - only don't let him catch you alone if he's got a drink in him... if you see what I mean."

"Like that, is he?" McCoy held the door open for the lady.

"Yes. Er... you're not, are you?"

"No, I am not!" McCoy replied emphatically.

"I'm glad to hear that." She smiled at him.

By the time the Admiral had finished hearing Kirk's preliminary report on the Royal Oak, one thought was engraved on Kirk's mind. He needed a good stiff drink! He had been grilled - to say the least - and he wasn't in a very good mood as he entered the bar. Almost immediately he spotted McCoy deep in conversation with the civilian Doctor.

"Well, well, what's this, then? A cosy party just for two?" he asked.

"Jim! Want to join us?" McCoy asked.

"Only if I'm not interrupting anything," Kirk responded as he caught the eye of the barman. "That's a double whisky and a refill here."

"No, you're not interrupting anything, Commander," McCoy answered as the implication of Kirk's comment hit him.

"That's fine. I'll join you, then."

"Commander, what's eating you?" McCoy asked as the barman placed Kirk's order in front of them.

"Nothing."

"You could have fooled me."

"How did the autopsy go?" Kirk asked, changing the subject before he downed his glass in one go.

"There's a report on your desk. Cause of death - a broken neck."

"That's all?"

"All I could find... only the way the neck was broken, I'd say it was *done by an expert*." McCoy hoped Kirk would catch his drift - with Flora McDonald present there was no way he could come out with the exact phrasing he would have liked to use.

"Explain."

"Well, from the location and the nature of the break, I'd say that the killer knew exactly where to apply the necessary pressure to snap the spine instantly." McCoy chose his words carefully, trying to repeat as closely as possible the words he had used once before, when Ambassador Gav was killed en route to Babel.

"I see... I think, Doctor, this conversation should be adjourned to my office. Dr. McDonald, if you will excuse us - " Kirk stood abruptly and headed for the door.

"Sorry, Flora, I just don't know where he's left his manners. Don't go away - I'll be back. O.K.?"

"O.K."

Once McCoy had closed the door firmly behind him, Kirk swung round. "I take it you were referring to tal shaya, Doctor."

"Yes - but how the hell could I come right out and say 'the Vulcan method of tal shaya'? Thank God Spock wasn't around - he'd have come right out with it!"

"I doubt he's that indiscreet." Kirk sighed. "Bones - are you sure?" He seated himself behind his desk.

"As sure as I can be; which leads me to think that Wiseman must be the killer."

"Would he know...?"

"Yes. From his file, he studied Vulcan martial arts, and he is highly capable - he's the Vulcan equivalent of a black belt." McCoy looked searchingly at his friend. "Anyway, what the hell was up with you back there? You were pretty damn rude to Flora!"

"Bones, I've had it up to here with top brass." Kirk gestured to the top of his head with one hand. "I thought our top brass was bad? They're peanuts compared to this lot - and I haven't met up with the Board of Enquiry brass yet! And I've a hellova sore head to crown it all."

McCoy produced two small blue pills from his jacket pocket and handed them over.

Kirk looked at them. "Bones, you've done it again, haven't you?" He swallowed the pills gratefully.

"Done what again?"

"Field medical kit."

"You mean insurance. Yep."

"Honestly. What would happen if - "

"Someone has to be prepared in case you go and - "

"Point taken, Doctor!" Kirk interrupted him.

"Well, if that's all, can I get back to the bar?"

"That's all. Bones... "

"Yes?"

"Remember your own advice for once. Don't go getting too involved."

"Who, me? I'm immune!"

Kirk looked at him. "Pull the other one, Bones."

At 8.30 the following morning Kirk stood at the pierside watching the St. Ola load up. He was so intent on watching the stevedores loading the Ferry that he failed to hear the air raid warning sounding.

Bob Croy was nearest to Kirk as the pilot of the German fighter plane, on a reconnaissance mission over the Flow, got a little trigger happy and came in fast, spluttering bullets from its guns along the length of the pier side. Croy managed to reach Kirk in a rugby style dive and they both ended up in the water.

They surfaced one after the other and swam for the nearby pier steps as the German plane swooped into the sky.

"You all right?" Croy asked as he grabbed the cold metal of the vertical steps.

"I think so," Kirk replied as he tried to raise his right arm to grab the other side of the frame. That was when he realised that he couldn't. "My arm!" he gasped as the plane took its second sweep of the morning. The sound of anti-aircraft guns filled the sky.

"You hit?" Croy shouted over the noise.

"I don't know! I can't feel anything. It's so damned cold!"

"Bloody Germans are meant to have an agreement - no shooting at ships tied up at a quayside."

"Who's kidding who?" Kirk asked.

"Let's get you up the ladder, sir," a voice called down.

Once up the ladder, both men were quickly wrapped in heavy blankets and carted off to the small field hospital set up between the church hall and the small annex built to the side and back.

As most of the Royal Oak survivors had been moved out the day before, the small hospital was virtually deserted. Dr. McDonald was in the office along with Dr. McCoy when the door to the hospital burst open.

"DOCTOR!" roared the ambulance driver. Both McDonald and McCoy raced from the office into the corridor.

"What happened?" McCoy blurted out as he checked the unconscious figure of Jim Kirk lying on the stretcher.

"He was conscious when we dragged him out of the water, Doctor."

"Water? What water?" McCoy asked as he motioned for Kirk to be laid down on the table they were using for operations.

"The harbour, Doctor," Croy said. Only the now damp blanket wrapped round him kept him from dripping water all over the floor.

"We were shot at while we were loading up. The Commander and I ended up in the water. He did say something about not being able to move his arm. We were in the water a good while." He caught McDonald's eye on him. "I'm all right. Just wet."

"Maybe so, Bob, but let's get you out of these wet clothes," Flora McDonald instructed as she led him out of the small kitchen that they were using as an operating room. "Doctor, I'll leave you to get on with your patient while I see to Mr. Croy. If you need any help, just call."

"Thanks." McCoy looked down at Kirk, and murmured almost absently, "Here we go again."

"Pardon?" She looked puzzled.

"Nothing. Just talking to myself."

Several hours later, both Doctors were standing studying Kirk's chart when he stirred. "What the hell hit me?" he asked as his eyes focused on the two white-coated doctors deep in conversation.

"How do you feel, Jim?" McCoy asked as he moved to the side of the bed and lifted Kirk's wrist to check his pulse. He carefully noted the reading on the chart.

"Waterlogged."

"I thought as much," he replied drily.

Dr. Flora McDonald studied both men carefully, amazed at the rapport between them. She had begun to suspect that the relationship between them was more than the casual friendship that inevitably developed between men assigned to serve together; the tone of the brief exchange seemed to indicate a depth of friendship that spoke of many years' comradeship.

"So?" Kirk asked almost defensively.

"Lie still, will you!?"

"What's the verdict, Bones?"

"Well, you managed to get yourself shot up," McCoy told him, thinking, *and what would you have done without me and my little insurance kit?*

"Bad?"

"Nnnoooo, but you'll be confined to bed for a day or so - and to make sure you stay bedded - Dr. McDonald, if you please?"

She had already anticipated the request and checked the dosage in the syringe, flicking it with her finger to remove the air bubble and in one swift movement she had pinched the skin and inserted the needle smoothly in and out.

"Ouch! What the - "

"It's all right, Jim. You've already had a massive dose of M&B antibiotic and an anti-tetanus to combat any infection, and that was

just a mild sedative to help you sleep, as I don't want you throwing up all over the place - the antibiotic could well affect you that way."

"Oh."

"You're lucky; it was just a ricochet that hit you, but it's bad enough. You won't be able to use your arm for a while, and you lost a fair bit of blood. Sleep is what you need right now, so - head down."

Scott had called in at the makeshift hospital to check on the condition of his Captain before he took off in a staff car on his own, without saying a word to anyone. It was his hunch that Wiseman was still active on the Island, masquerading as the person whose murdered body had been found at the bottom of the ocean, and he wanted to have a good look at the block ships and tides off Kirkwall Sound.

The divers' reports hadn't impressed him but the Admiralty being the way it was, there was nothing he could do but accept it; he was certainly not going to be allowed to go down himself. It was ironic, he conceded; he might have no experience of diving, but he was not without experience of working in airless conditions! Unfortunately, he could not admit to that.

However, when he arrived at the Pacific Point he got out of the driving seat and stood looking across Kirk Sound to Lambholm.

There was nothing to be seen. No Camp 60; no Italian Chapel... nor would there be until the Barriers were begun.

The Sound was running its tidal race, breaking into rough waves over the blockship sunk not quite in the middle. Once the Churchill Barriers went up, the treacherous currents that raced each other through the Sound would be broken and the eastern approaches of Scapa Flow sealed for all time.

Scott knew nothing could come in by way of them; he also knew that Kirk Sound was too shallow for any submarine or U-boat to manoeuvre through, even at a very high tide. The official report had stated it was Holm Sound that Prien had used to come in and out.

Scott's mind raced on as he stood staring across the Sounds.

Wiseman had to be close by - but where?

What one of the sailors had said during the interviews came back to him. The supply boat from Scapa Pier! Drawing his hand over his newly-acquired beard, in six long strides he was back in the seat of the staff car heading once again through Kirkwall and on towards Stromness to write a report for the Admiralty that would suggest the building of the Barriers.

That evening saw Scott sitting quietly at the bar of the inn savouring a large whisky.

A local was leaning on the bar near him, talking to the barman.

"I hear your cousin's back on the Island, Bill?"

"Aye - but he's no' the same Duncan Rendall that left Orkney," the barman replied as he poured a pint for the man.

"What do you mean, Bill?"

"Well, Andy, for one thing he's got a beard. Another thing - he didna' recognise me. Ye'd think that wi' me bein' his only surviving relative he would know me. And now he's Piermaster at Scapa, he's gone all high and mighty. Well, it's no' like Duncan."

"It only takes a few weeks to grow a full beard," Andy objected.

"Aye, that might be so... but for some reason the males of my family line - and remember, his father and mine were brothers - never were able to grow a beard. I don't need to shave. It's a genetic disorder, and *all* the males in the family are meant to be afflicted - if ye can call it an affliction."

"Aye, it must be great no' having tae shave!"

"It does have its drawbacks sometimes. But ye see why I find it strange that Duncan should suddenly appear back home, ignore me and grow a beard? It's as though he's hiding from someone!"

"Or something..." Andy finished his pint and pushed the glass back for a refill.

Scott tossed back the last of his whisky and left the bar. He headed back through the dimly lit streets of Stromness to the hotel, his thoughts on the conversation he had overheard.

Was it possible that this Duncan Rendall was in fact Wiseman?

There was only one way he could prove it, and that was to try to get hold of the Piermaster - but as Scott already knew, trying to get hold of him wasn't easy.

Well, he did have a few loose ends to tie up at Scapa; and when better to do so than tomorrow?

Scott's trip to Scapa Pier proved once again to be non-productive. Rendall was nowhere to be found, although Scott did find out that during his lunch hour Rendall had a habit of disappearing with his drawing pad. The man he spoke to in the pier office kept him talking for more than an hour, but it was a productive hour; he learned that the drawings and watercolour paintings decorating the office were all done by Duncan Rendall.

With a few exceptions, they gave a very comprehensive picture of the land around Scapa Flow.

Back at Stromness, Scott parked the staff car and made his way to the hotel bar. McCoy was already there, sitting at a table in the corner sipping a drink.

"How's the skipper?" Scott called over as he ordered for

himself.

"I'll let him up in the morning provided the wound isn't leaking," McCoy responded.

Scott took his drink over to McCoy's table. "Len, I need to talk."

"What's the problem?" McCoy asked as Scott sat down.

"I think I've tracked down Wiseman."

"Where?" McCoy asked, rather loudly.

"Not so loud!" Scott hissed.

"Sorry. But where?"

"Scapa Pier." Scott raised his glass to his lips.

"The Piermaster?"

"That's the man."

"What makes you think it's him?"

Scott put his glass down on the table. "I'm adding together a few odd facts. I overheard a conversation at the inn last night. One of the men just happened to be Duncan Rendall's only living relative, who found it strange that Rendall had grown a beard - something to do with a family quirk. The men have never had facial hair."

"That's not much to go on."

"There's more," Scott said.

"Go on, then."

"He's doing a lot of drawings of the land around Scapa."

"An artist has to draw something," McCoy objected. "A lot of them specialise in drawing the area around where they live."

"Aye, they do. But not a militarily sensitive area in time of war."

"That's true. But still... "

"Call it a gut feeling if you like, but it's Wiseman all right."

"Have you seen him to make a positive identification?" McCoy asked shrewdly.

"Not yet. He keeps on avoiding me. Why? But I'll see him yet. It's just a matter of time. I know where I can go to make sure of seeing him."

"Where?" McCoy asked.

"The Ring of Brogar."

"The Ring of... what?"

"It's a ring of neolithic standing stones beside the lochs of Stenness and Harry, on the main road to Kirkwall."

McCoy looked slightly blank, and Scott explained further. "A few of his drawings weren't of Scapa. They were of the standing stones. I got the impression he drew Scapa because he felt he must - and the neolithic stones because he wanted to. There was a different sort of *feel* about those drawings."

"Oh. I see - I think."

"It's the big stone circle between the lochs - "

"And he likes to draw it."

"So it means being in the right place at the right time."

"As usual," McCoy said drily as he finished his drink.

"Want another?" Scott asked.

"Why not? The night's still young - and Jim's tucked up tight!"

McCoy crawled out of bed the next morning aware of having drunk just a little too much the previous night. He left his hotel room and headed straight for the hospital. He'd have to face Jim and all his moaning sooner or later, so the sooner the better; anyway, he wouldn't be able to stomach any breakfast for a while, not even the liquid they called 'tea'. How Scotty ever managed to eat a hearty breakfast the morning after, McCoy could never understand. All he wanted or needed was an alcohol detoxin, and that was the one thing he had not thought to include in his field kit.

The last thing he wanted right now was an earful of Jim's moaning about when could he leave sickbay; so, more reluctantly than he had ever done in the past, McCoy decided to let Jim Kirk out of sickbay. He couldn't quite put a finger on why he was so reluctant, but he knew he couldn't keep his Captain tied down forever; and he also knew something else was sure to happen to Kirk - for it did, nine times out of ten. He didn't like the feeling one bit - and that put him in an even worse mood than he was in already.

"Jim, just get up and dressed, and for goodness' sake give my poor ears peace."

"I haven't even opened my mouth yet, Bones!"

"Just get dressed, will you, and stay out of the path of fighter planes - O.K.?"

"Do you think I got myself shot deliberately?" Kirk snapped as he hauled on his uniform trousers, wincing as he tried to save his injured arm.

"With you, that's a question I refuse to answer. Look, Jim, I'm sorry for snapping, but I feel like hell this morning."

"What's up?"

"Nothing. Just a hangover. I was drinking with Scotty last night... Jim! I just remembered - you know what?"

"Not till you tell me."

"He's got this theory about Wiseman... but if you ask me he's clutching at straws."

"That's unlike Scotty. He usually has some facts to go on," Kirk commented as he struggled to button up his uniform shirt.

"Let me do that, Jim." McCoy's nimble fingers started to fasten the buttons.

"Go on, then. What makes him suspect someone, and who is the suspect?"

"He's got nothing but circumstantial evidence - something he overheard in the inn added on to a bit of observation that I think could be misplaced."

"At the moment, even circumstantial evidence gives us something to go on. We've certainly got nothing concrete. Who's his possible culprit?"

"The Scapa Piermaster."

"Funny. I wondered about him, too."

"You two should get together and compare notes."

"You know, Bones, that's exactly what I'm going to do."

"You'll find him in your office."

"Eh? Doing what?" Kirk pushed his injured arm into his jacket sleeve, wincing again, then thrust the good arm into its sleeve.

"Writing a report. You in pain?"

"Not really." He looked at McCoy's disbelieving face and modified his answer. "Just when I try to do too much with it."

"Like getting dressed. Oh, go on - get out of here before I change my mind."

"Aye, aye, sir!" Kirk said snappily as he put on his cap.

"Just remember to let me dress that arm - O.K.?"

"Yes, of course I will - " Half way to the door, Kirk stopped dead in his tracks. He turned to stare at McCoy. "Oh. I get it. 'Insurance'?"

"That's right."

Kirk found Scott in his office, as McCoy had said, busily finishing the report that would go with the plans already sitting on the desk.

"Busy?" he asked as he closed the door behind him.

"Commander! Are ye well enough to be up?"

"Bones kicked me out of bed."

"Ye mean ye moaned at him until he got fed up and let ye up," Scott replied undutifully as Kirk pulled out a chair, carefully using only his good arm.

"I didn't open my mouth," Kirk defended himself.

"Well, he knew ye would if he tried to make ye stay put."

Kirk had the grace to look slightly sheepish. "I suppose he did. What are you working on?"

"A report for the Board of Enquiry."

"May I see it?"

"Aye - here ye are."

Jim Kirk read through the report with genuine interest. "These plans are fantastic, Scotty! How did you manage to do them?"

"I called up the Guardian - he sent me through the originals."

Kirk nodded. "That makes sense. Now, how about Wiseman?"

Scott repeated the facts he had already given McCoy, and Kirk listened with more interest than the Doctor had shown.

"You're quite sure this Duncan Rendall is Wiseman, aren't you?"

"Aye, I am," Scott responded.

"It certainly sounds feasible, but I take McCoy's point - it's all circumstantial, and actually proving anything could be difficult."

"If we could just pin him down and get a good look at him... "

"Yes. I wish Spock was here," Kirk said, apparently irrelevantly.

The security in and around Stromness had been severely tightened up and the one and only main road out of the township boasted a patrol night and day by M.P.s with alsatian dogs. Every horse cart, car and wagon was subjected to a strict military check at the checkpoint which sported a brightly-painted swing arm barrier across the road. The word STOP stood out on it, and the M.P. on duty made sure that everyone did just that.

It had become clear to everyone that something was far from right. The locals tried to carry on as if nothing was going on around them, but it was difficult; people who had grown up in the area and knew everyone in the locality found it very hard to be treated as if they were strangers and suspected of treachery, especially when the M.P. on duty knew them - Scapa Flow had been a naval base since the 1914-18 war and naval personnel were a familiar

sight.

Of course, the main reason for the increase in security wasn't the fact that there was a war on but rather that the Island was playing host to some of the top naval officers the country had to offer.

The Board of Enquiry sat in conference for three days listening to all the available evidence on the Royal Oak, going over and over again the defences for Scapa Flow. The conclusion they reached was that the Home Fleet be moved to the Firth of Forth until Scapa could be made permanently safe. Scott's plans were revealed, substantial interest was shown and they were submitted for further consideration.

There was nothing more the Starfleet men could do. The plans had been submitted, and provided history wasn't changed in any way the eastern approaches to Scapa Flow would be sealed for all time. Their job, as far as Naval Command was concerned, was over.

'Commander' Kirk sat behind his desk facing his men.

"I wish Spock was here," McCoy commented, without realising he was echoing Kirk.

"Well, he's not," Kirk retorted with a sharpness that had a great deal to do with his own wish for his Science Officer's presence. "We can't expect him to turn up out of the blue."

"He did the last time," Tyson said, a note of wishful thinking in his voice.

"Apart from getting Spock here, does anyone have any bright suggestions for catching Wiseman?" Kirk said with exaggerated patience.

"We know he likes to draw the stone circle, so let's see if we can get hold of him there," Scott suggested.

"You mean Duncan Rendall likes drawing the stone circle," McCoy said tiredly.

"Bones, I know you're just trying to force us to think three times before we accuse the man, but we don't have any other suspect," Kirk told him. "I think Scotty's right; there's not much else we can do, anyway. Right now, we've finished with the current orders, but new orders could come through any time - I can't see Naval Command giving us much free time before they recall us. We can't get back to our own time without catching Wiseman - anyway, if we try, we'll probably find it's not our own time any more - and while I don't know about you lot, I certainly don't fancy being stuck here for the duration of a war, let alone my entire lifetime. Our real job has to be done, and I doubt we have more than forty eight hours or so to do it. Let's get moving. Nobody's going to think it odd if we take the opportunity to do a little sight-seeing before we're ordered away again."

"Aye/agreed, sir/all right, Jim," came a ragged chorus.

.

As Jim Kirk stood he winced again from the pain in his shoulder and arm. They were aching more than he cared to admit even to himself; it was a good job that McCoy's head was turned the other way or he would not have agreed to go ahead with the trip to the Ring of Brogar.

They were just turning towards the door when it opened without as much as a knock. Kirk only just stopped himself from giving the offender a blast - it was the Admiral Commanding Orkney and Shetland himself.

"Ah, Kirk," the ACOS said as he shut the door. "I was just over at the hospital. Dr. McDonald told me you'd be here. How's the arm?"

"Fine, sir." He was aware that the others had all stiffened to attention.

"Good, good. There's a little job I want you to do for me."

"Sir?"

"It would seem we have a German spy on the Islands. Naval Command wants him found, and fast. You are to liaise with the British Intelligence Officer who has been working here and combine your strengths." The ACOS smiled as he gave them their orders.

Kirk frowned slightly. A British Intelligence Officer? "How long has this chap been here?"

"More to the point, what's his name and how do we find him?" McCoy asked.

"I don't know how long he's been here nor do I know his name. He has been working undercover. All I know is that I was told he would contact you, Commander." He glanced round. "If you require anything, just ask. The Admiralty wants this spy badly."

"Understood, sir."

"Right, I'm off. Paperwork to attend to." With that he disappeared, closing the door behind him and leaving Kirk with the impression that the ACOS hated paperwork as much as he did.

"I wonder who this agent is." McCoy spoke his thoughts.

"How do I know?" Kirk asked, trying to suppress the hope that it might be Spock.

There had been no explanation, only a direct request that Spock should beam down to the planet - wearing a full facial beard. The Time Guardian had been direct - indeed, more than direct. He had ordered Spock to beam down as soon as possible wearing the clothing of 1939 as well as something of that period to cover his ears and eyebrows. M'Benga had taken some time to apply a false beard, hair by hair to look natural, and the stores had come up with a balaclava, so with that in hand Spock shimmered and vanished from the Starship.

The Time Guardian was waiting for him when he materialised. Once released from the effect of the transporter, Spock stepped

forwards.

"Sir."

The Time Guardian saw the look of controlled patience on the Vulcan's face and felt the sensation of unease radiating from him. "Perhaps I should explain."

"I would be grateful if you would," Spock replied.

"If you would be seated, please?" The Guardian indicated a seat.

Once Spock was sitting the Guardian continued. "I have been monitoring the progress made by Captain Kirk and his team. Your Chief Engineer has figured out who Wiseman is - a man called Duncan Rendall - but unfortunately there is very little they can do; I suspect Wiseman has seen them, recognised them, and is deliberately keeping out of their way.

"You will go there as a British Intelligence Officer in pursuit of a German agent, but you will have to hurry; the readings I have indicate a Time Hole is appearing, but exactly where, I do not know. However, should Wiseman slip into it, he will be lost for the time being, for these Time Holes are uncontrollable - unlike the Portal itself - for it is a hole in time within the portal."

"I see. One question; should he go through this Hole, will Wiseman be lost for all time, or will he appear elsewhere?"

"A good question, Mr. Spock. Unfortunately, I do not have an answer. In short, I do not know. There are no records of anyone going through one of those Holes in Time. In theory it is possible that he will return to the dimension of Time that he left - either the same place in a different era or a different place in the same era. I have no idea.

"He must be stopped, Mr. Spock. He cannot be allowed to wander through Time. The damage he could do..." The Guardian shuddered.

"What if he should slip through the Hole?"

"In that case there is nothing you can do. Although there is no record of anyone going through a Hole, I do know that one entry will upset the balance of Time, but not irreparably; two entering would destroy the Time line, and everything that should happen will be changed.

"If he goes through, no-one must follow him, and I will instruct the computer to look for him. It may take a few days to locate him - it may take a few years; but in theory he has to reappear somewhere."

"I understand."

"Here are your papers." The Guardian handed them over. Spock took them from him and carefully studied them. When he raised his head, the Guardian said, "If you are ready?"

Spock nodded and took up his position on the pad of the Time Portal. The Guardian crossed to the control panel and touched a switch. Spock shimmered away.

He materialised in a quiet back street. He spun round to make sure no-one had seen him arrive in such an unorthodox manner.

Now to find out where he was - that was the one thing the Guardian had omitted to tell him. His sense of direction took him towards the Harbour; from the layout and the boats tied up, Spock came to the conclusion that if the St. Ola and the St. Ninian were tied up here for the night, then he must be in Stromness - where his friends were.

Now to find the Hotel - what was it called? Oh, yes - Mackay's.

Spock did a full 180 degree turn to orientate himself, and quickly spotted the Hotel. He was thankful for the warm clothing the quartermaster had supplied, including the headgear. Slowly he made his way up to the Hotel, only to be stopped outside its front door by a sentry on duty.

"Who goes there?"

"Lt. Commander Young, British Intelligence." Spock flashed his ID under the sentry's nose, glad that he had taken the time to check it before the Time Portal whisked him away. It would have looked more than suspicious if he had not known his own name!

"Yes, sir. Sorry, sir." The last few days had accustomed the young private to the presence of senior officers on the Island, but this was the first time he had had to challenge one of them, and he was not sure that the officer would appreciate it.

"Why?" Spock asked. "You are simply doing your job. If you're on sentry duty, never be over-awed by rank - you can't let anyone walk in unchallenged, no matter how high a rank his uniform says he holds - and if any officer objects or refuses to identify himself, call the officer of the watch."

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. If you go in, the officer of the watch is at the registration desk."

Spock nodded his thanks, entered the Hotel and crossed to the registration desk, where the duty officer was leaning on the counter talking to another officer. He straightened as Spock approached.

"Can I help you, sir?"

"Yes. Is Commander Kirk in?" Spock asked. Vulcan control or not, it was taking him all his time to behave naturally, for he knew that his black clothing and beard were causing 'a bit of a stir' as his Captain would have put it.

"Do you have any identification, sir?"

"Yes, Lieutenant." Spock handed over his ID once again. The Lieutenant studied it, wondering why this officer was out of uniform.

"British Intelligence?" he hazarded.

"Yes. Now, is Kirk in?"

"Yes, sir. Dawson!" he yelled. An able-seaman appeared.

"Yessir!"

"Dawson will show you to his office," the duty officer said, handing back Spock's papers. "Take Lt. Commander Young to Commander Kirk's office," he told the man.

Spock followed the able-seaman through the bar and on along the corridor. Finally, Dawson stopped at a door and knocked.

"Come!" It was Kirk's voice.

Dawson opened the door and ushered Spock in. "Lt. Commander Young, sir. British Intelligence."

Now how did Dawson know that? Spock wondered. *He wasn't told it... He must have been listening. Well, wasn't 'walls have ears' a saying of this era?* He must remember - and warn Jim to remember - to be careful of what they said.

"Thank you. Come in, Young - the ACOS told us to expect you." The door closed behind the able-seaman as he left the Intelligence team to it, his mind working busily. Something big was definitely going on! That was five of them in uniform and at least one undercover agent...

"Well, don't just stand there, Young - draw up a seat." One look at the heavy beard had been enough to shatter Kirk's hopes.

Spock listened to the footsteps in the corridor fading, then replied softly, "Thank you, Jim."

McCoy almost fell off his seat in astonishment.

"Spock!" Kirk looked stunned. The rapid switch of emotion, from hope to disappointment to elation, was almost too much for him to handle.

"Yes, Captain."

The others sat, dumbstruck, too startled to say anything. It was Kirk who finally managed,

"All right - how? Why?"

"We have a problem. Apparently there is what the Guardian called a Time Hole appearing somewhere on this island. He was unable to determine just where or when - "

"A 'Time Hole'?" Kirk asked.

"Yes, sir. It is a part of the Time Portal where time is slipping, causing a rift into another dimension."

"I see - I think. So?"

"Wiseman must not find it. However, if by some chance he does, and goes through, he will eventually return, but the Guardian could not say where or when."

"It sounds as if the Guardian knows Wiseman is going to find this hole," McCoy said slowly.

"Yes, I believe he does, but he is hoping that we can prevent Wiseman from going through. If we cannot - if he does go through the Hole - under no circumstances are we to follow. If we did, it would destroy Time as we know it."

"Understood," Kirk replied.

"One other thing - the Guardian said that Mr. Scott had correctly identified Wiseman as a man called Duncan Rendall."

"I told ye!" Scott could not help crowing slightly.

"Yes, Scotty, you did," Kirk answered with a glance at McCoy. "All right - how do we get him?"

The room fell silent. Finally, Scott said slowly, "I still think the best plan is to go to the Stone Circle and wait there."

"Stone Circle?" Spock asked.

"It's a neolithic structure," Kirk told him. "According to Scotty, Wiseman is something of an artist, and likes to draw them."

"Aye - his office at Scapa is full of drawings, and there are too many of the Ring of Brogar to be just chance." Scott drew in a sudden breath. "Captain - it's the Ring! That's where this Time Hole is, somewhere in the Circle!"

"Mr. Scott could well be right," Spock said slowly. "There are many tales of strange happenings at neolithic-culture structures from many planets, and none of these worlds has yet discovered exactly why they were built."

"You mean this stone circle could be causing the Time Hole, Mr. Spock?" Tyson asked.

"I believe I just said so."

"All right, then - what are we going to do about it?" McCoy wanted to know. "Do we beard him in his den - that is, the stone circle - or should we delay, in case we panic him through it, and try to catch him somewhere else?"

"Well, we haven't had much success in finding him in his office at Scapa," Kirk replied. "No, I think we're going to have to track him down, and the Ring does seem the best bet, Time Hole or no. Gentlemen, I suggest we all have an early night - and by that, I mean early. Spock, have you been given a room here? No? We'll get one arranged for you." He stretched unwarily, and flinched as his arm throbbed. "Hopefully, by this time tomorrow we'll be home."

"Ye mean I canna hae a wee dram?" Scott questioned dismally.

"That's right, Scotty. Your 'wee dram' usually leads to another... and another... I'm not saying you'd get drunk, but you'll need all your wits about you tomorrow. So no, not tonight. I want this wrapped up quickly now. We'll meet here at 0700 tomorrow. Goodnight, gentlemen." He nodded dismissal, then added, "Bones, a word with you."

McCoy, halfway to the door behind Scott, paused. Kirk waited until the door was closed, then said, "You don't happen to have a couple of pain killers, do you?" He was finally giving in to the

pain in his arm and shoulder. Spock looked sharply at him.

"Shoulder giving you trouble?" McCoy was deliberately casual in an attempt to calm Spock's concern.

"It's aching a bit."

"O.K. Come up to my room once you've got Spock settled and I'll give you something, and check the wound at the same time." Warning bells were beginning to go off inside McCoy's head; for the Captain to ask for pain killers - except for a headache - meant that the pain must be bad indeed.

"Wound?" Spock asked sharply.

"It was just a ricochet," Kirk said casually. "Nothing serious. It just aches a bit."

The following morning brought McCoy's fears to a head. He was none too pleased as he redressed Kirk's arm; for the injury was not healing. Instead, it was showing signs of infection.

"The sooner I get you home the better," he grumbled. "That arm is going to need more done to it than I can do here." He finished putting a fresh dressing on it.

"Can I get dressed now?"

"Yes, put your shirt back on and let's get going."

Kirk had decided to send Keller and Tyson to Scapa Pier to watch Wiseman in case he was there, while the rest of them went to the Stone Circle to check it out.

The Ring of Brogar stood on a strip of land between the two lochs, majestic against the morning light. McCoy stopped to look at the deep moat that surrounded the structure.

"How deep do you reckon that hole is?" He pointed to the moat.

"That 'hole', Doctor, happens to be a moat, and it is approximately twenty feet deep," Spock answered.

"Right." Kirk cut in to prevent any argument. "Let's see if we can find a place to lie low."

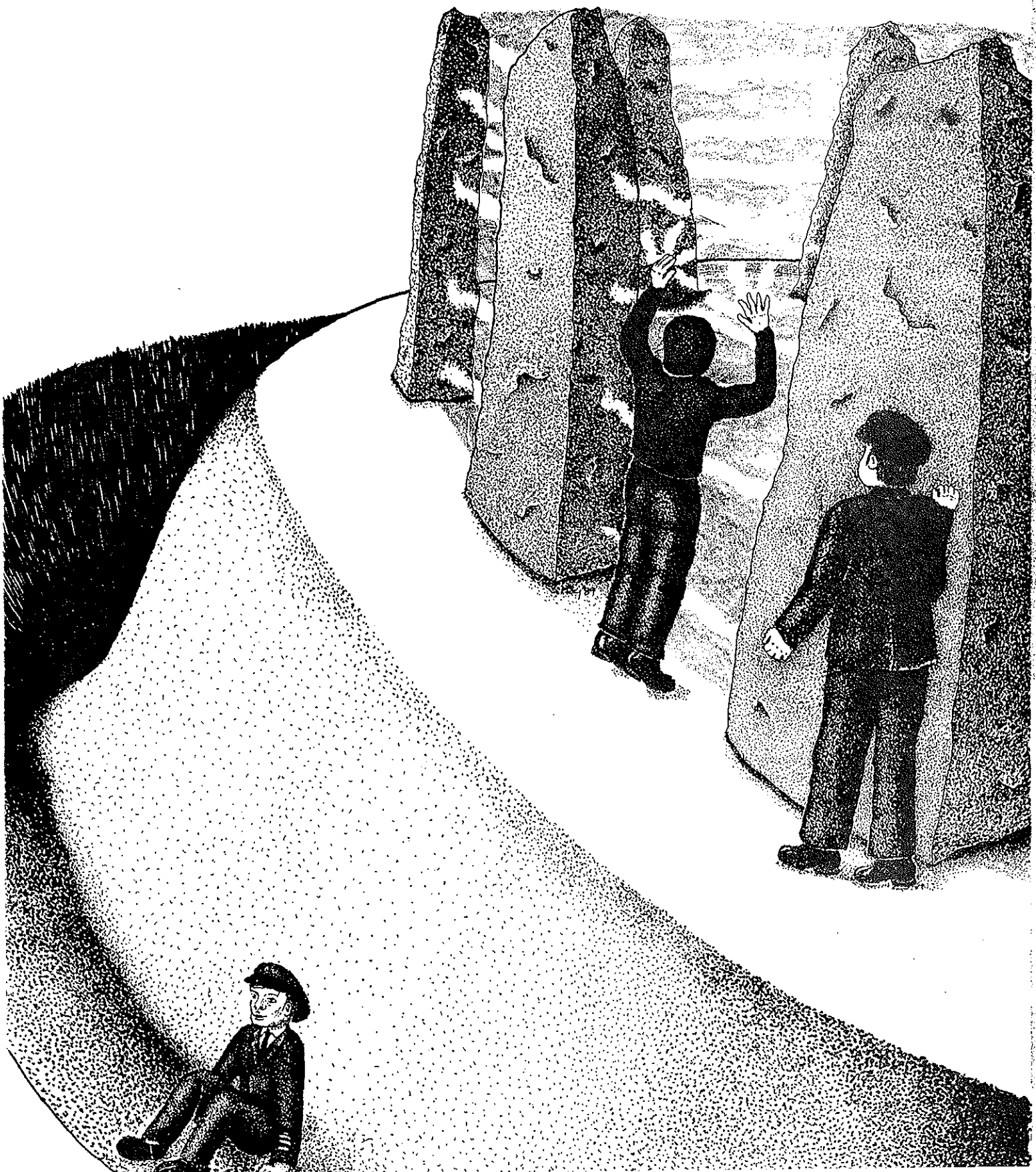
"There is someone coming," Spock informed them as he pulled the balaclava down over his ears.

"Right. Down into the moat," Kirk ordered as he started to clamber down the slippery slope. His feet went from under him and he landed at the bottom in a heap, knocking the wind out of himself.

McCoy was the first to reach him. "Are you all right?" he asked urgently. Spock's, "Captain?" echoed McCoy.

"Winded," he managed to gasp. "I'll be fine."

McCoy grunted and thrust a fist hard against Kirk's diaphragm. It drove the last of the air from Kirk's lungs and he managed to draw a deep breath. He took a couple of seconds to recover, then



said, "Can anyone see who's coming?"

Once Spock had seen that Kirk had not in fact hurt himself, he had scrambled back up the side, to lie watching the figure slowly walking around the outer edge of the circle. Kirk crawled over to join him, followed by the other two.

"What's he doing?" McCoy breathed.

"He's got a sketch pad," Scott offered. "He could be looking for a good angle to draw the stones again."

"It is Wiseman," Kirk confirmed.

"Wouldn't he need to be standing a bit further back if he wanted to draw the stones?" McCoy asked. "I think he's looking for something."

"What's that noise?" Spock asked as sharply as was possible for a whisper, his Vulcan ears the first to pick up a soft buzzing noise that slowly got louder.

Wiseman stopped suddenly; he had clearly found what he had been looking for. Then, without a backward glance, he stepped between two stones and disappeared.

All four Enterprise men were on their feet and running within moments. Kirk made to run between two stones and into the Ring, heading towards the point where Wiseman had disappeared. Spock shouted "No, Jim!" but the Human was running too fast to stop himself. Spock knew a moment of pure terror as he remembered what the Guardian had said; and then something invisible brought Kirk up short. He bounced back a considerable distance and landed on his backside.

Spock drew a deep, relieved breath. The Guardian's fears had clearly been misplaced; the Time Hole would not readily let a second person through.

"A force field," he said.

McCoy skidded to a halt beside Kirk and extended his hand. "Not your day, is it, Jim?" he asked sympathetically as Kirk took it and was pulled to his feet.

"A force field?" Kirk asked. "It felt like elastic!" He rubbed his back end ruefully.

Spock advanced slowly and stopped when a gently trembling presence prevented any further advance. The cold throbbing against his outstretched hand spread to his entire body, and he stepped back.

"It's the Stones!" Scott said, his voice filled with awe. The others listened carefully, and realised that he was right.

The Stones were humming.

"Is it something alive?" Kirk heard himself asking.

"I should not think so," Spock replied.

Scott had been prowling round the circle and now he stopped at

the exact point where Wiseman disappeared. "The humming is louder here," he called. "And it looks odd..."

"Do not attempt to enter, Mr. Scott," Spock ordered.

"Spock?" Kirk asked.

"It is the Time Hole, Captain. We have failed; Wiseman has gone - at least for now. Mr. Scott - can you see anything?" He began to move round the Circle, closely followed by Kirk and McCoy.

"No, Mr. Spock. It's like a mist in there. I canna even see the Stones on the other side there."

Then, just as the three men reached Scott, the humming stopped.

The silence was deafening. The barrier had gone, taking the Time Hole - and Wiseman - with it.

"Starfleet's gonna love me for this!" Kirk groaned.

"It was not your fault," Spock assured him. "How could we have known that Wiseman would know about the Time Hole? Even the Time Guardian himself only realised its significance a few hours ago."

Kirk nodded slowly, accepting Spock's reasoning, as McCoy said, "If Starfleet doesn't like it, they can lump it!"

He looked round. "We might as well get back to Stromness. There's nothing more we can do here."

Commander Kirk's small office looked like an Art Gallery, with paintings, line drawings and charts pinned to the walls.

"Was there anything more?" Kirk asked as Keller finished pinning up the last drawing.

"Only this, sir." Tyson dumped a battered case on top of the desk and opened it.

"What is it?" McCoy asked, peering in at the knobs and dials.

"An old style radio transmitter," Scott said, admiration in his voice.

"That settles it, then," Kirk said decisively. "There has to be some information in these too." He gestured to the wall that held the drawings.

"Aye," Scott said. "They were what made me suspicious right away." He peered closer. "Look!" He pointed to one of the diagrams. "This one clearly shows the tidal races. And this one - it's nearly the same, but see, *here*..." He pointed to the blockship which had clearly moved its position.

"Are there any dates on these?" Kirk asked as he suddenly realised just how much information was stored in the artwork.

"There." Spock pointed to a small cluster of figures in one corner, that Kirk had assumed was the artist's signature.

Kirk lifted the telephone and called the ACOS, asking him to join them.

The ACOS took only a few minutes to grasp the significance of the information Kirk's team had uncovered, and moved on it right away. He spent several minutes on the telephone, then turned back to Kirk.

"It was the last gale that shifted the blockship in Kirk Sound. It left a clear channel for anything - anything at all - to come into the Flow. We'll have to check all the Sounds. The spy got away, you said?"

"Unfortunately. We were just too late to stop him." Kirk hoped the ACOS would not ask for details. It was one thing for them to know about Time displacement - they had already experienced it several times - but to tell someone in this time period about it?

"I suppose he's away with more of those drawings," the Admiral muttered gloomily. He sighed. "I imagine the body the St. Ola brought in the other day was the real Duncan Rendall. The spy must have realised then that the game was up, but didn't have time to destroy these ones."

"Or he may not have realised we would be able to 'read' them," Kirk suggested. "He had, after all, established that he was a keen artist. Our own first impression was that he had been limited by his job - and the war - to drawing the area around Scapa." He glanced almost mischievously at McCoy.

"There is one thing," the Admiral was saying.

"Yes, sir?"

"I'll need a written report from you - and from each of your men."

"Yes, sir. In triplicate?"

"Yes. Sorry, boys, but it's got to be done. And thanks." The Admiral left the room and Kirk turned to deal with the moans and groans of his men.

"I thought - "

"Just shut up, McCoy," Kirk said tiredly. "And that goes for all of you. This report has to be written before we can leave. Each of you played a different part in the investigation. I suggest you all find a corner and settle into it to write out your comments. Oh - remember the spy's name is Rendall... and I suggest that in spite of the weather he left in a small powered boat, heading for the open sea, probably hoping to be picked up by a submarine. Dismissed. McCoy - any chance of a couple of... ?"

McCoy grunted. "Here." He took a small container from his pocket and tipped out two pills. "Don't mix them with any alcohol." He had a feeling that Kirk, faced with the unwelcome prospect of writing out a report, might look for a drink to help oil his mental

cogs.

Since much of it was a fairly elaborate fiction, it took Kirk almost two hours to complete his report and satisfy himself that it was credible and as full as he could make it. By the time he had finished he had a splitting headache despite McCoy's pills, and felt desperately in need of some fresh air. He locked the report in the top drawer of his desk, left the office and headed out into the crisp air of the night.

Because of the blackout, the street was in total darkness. Kirk stood still, letting his eyes adjust.

He knew the inn at the harbour front would be open, and turned that way. He wanted a drink, to relax after the strain of composing his report, and had totally forgotten McCoy's warning. But he also needed to be by himself for a while, away from his crew.

What was the Guardian up to? Why hadn't he returned them home yet? After all, the job they had come here to do had been done - not successfully, but done just the same. There was nothing else they could do here - and the longer Spock was here, the more chance there was of its being realised that he was not Human.

"A penny for them, Commander."

Kirk jumped at the sound of Dr. Flora McDonald's voice. Where she had sprung from he would never know.

"Sorry - I didn't see you."

"I know. It is dark, after all. But anyway, you were miles away."

"I was just thinking..." There was an oddly depressed note in his voice, she thought. Then he seemed to pull himself together. "I'm just on my way over to the inn - would you like to join me?"

"Why not? But why the inn, rather than the mess?" Flora took his arm as they headed in the direction of the inn.

"I want somewhere where I can breathe a different kind of conversation."

"No shop talk, you mean?"

"Something like that, Flora," Kirk replied as he held the inn door open for her.

They went to an empty table at the far corner of the deserted bar, next to the log fire. "What would you like?" he asked.

"Just a lemonade, please."

"Right." He crossed to the bar.

"What'll it be, Commander?" the barman asked.

"Lemonade for the lady, and a beer for me, please. Are you always this quiet?" He gestured round the emptiness of the bar.

"No, I'm busy enough most nights. There's a dance on at Kirkwall tonight; most of the locals are at it. I'll make up the business some other night when there's a dance here."

Kirk nodded, and took the two glasses over to the table, making sure he had the lighter lemonade in his bad hand. As he drew up a chair, Flora eyed him closely.

"Commander - "

"Jim, please. I'm off duty right now."

"All right, Jim. How's the arm?"

"McCoy's keeping an eye on it. It's coming on fine," he lied. It was anything but 'fine'; despite McCoy's pills it was hurting like hell.

"I'm glad to hear that. I suppose that's your job here finished, and you'll be off soon, now that the top brass are leaving?" She sipped her lemonade.

"There's no word as yet. I expect our new orders will be in by the weekend." He rubbed the side of his head.

"Are you sure you're all right?"

"Just a headache," Kirk replied. "I always get one when I have a report to write. I've taken something for it." He took a long draught of his beer, and sighed. "Ah, that's better!"

The night ended when the barman reluctantly called, "Time." He hated having to close the bar - two customers were better than none - and thought longingly of the days when closing time had been less rigidly enforced by the local police.

Kirk stood and helped Flora into her coat, aware that his head was swimming slightly. He was steady enough on his feet, however.

"I'll walk you home, if you like." His speech was ever so slightly slurred.

"Yes, please. It's a bit scary walking without any lights."

The icy coldness of the night air hit them as soon as they left the inn. Kirk slipped his arm round Flora's waist and supported her as the wind rushed round them, biting into them. She led him through two almost pitch black lanes to a row of houses that backed onto the sea.

"This is where I live."

"You don't live with your family?"

"No, this is the surgery. I took it over when Dr. Johnston died." She sighed. "Poor man. He really wanted to retire, you know, he was over 65. He just stayed on because there was nobody else. There were so many things he wanted to do after he retired... and then he died, still in harness. You look like you could do with a hot drink," she added briskly. "Come in."

He hesitated for a few seconds; he had begun to think longingly of lying down. The thought of a warm drink before he headed back through the icy streets was appealing, however, and he finally replied, "Yes, thanks, I'd like that," and closed the door behind him.

Kirk woke next morning to find himself in a strange bed; and he was more than a little surprised to see McCoy standing, his face full of concern, at the bottom of the bed.

"He's awake, Len." It was a female voice that Kirk couldn't quite place although he felt he should know it.

"Bones," he whispered as McCoy raised his head from examining the contents of his bag and moved up to his side.

"Take it easy, Jim."

"Where am I?" Kirk managed. He tried to sit up, and was gently but firmly pushed back down by someone at his other side.

"Lie still." It was the woman's voice again.

"Bones?"

"You're in Flora's bed. You collapsed on her last night. Now stay still!" There was a slight edge to McCoy's otherwise gentle voice.

"What's wrong with me?"

"Not much." His voice was dry. "Too much to drink last night, and when you fell you smashed your head on the fireplace and knocked yourself out. In the process you reopened your shoulder wound - though that's something of a blessing, for it let out a nasty little pocket of pus that had been forming. Jim, I warned you not to have anything to drink."

"I forgot. Guess I'm in the doghouse?"

"You will be, when I get you back on - "

"Point taken, Bones!" Kirk interrupted, realising that McCoy had forgotten where he was and might say too much. "Can I get up now?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Well, for a start you've got a lump the size of an egg on your head," Flora informed him.

"Is that all?" Kirk swung his legs out of bed before anyone could stop him. He came to his feet too fast, swayed and sat down abruptly, jarring his sore shoulder and arm.

"Let that be a lesson to you!" McCoy had been semi-prepared for his Captain's reaction.

"I'm going to be sick," Kirk gasped. A basin appeared from

nowhere, just in time.

"Feeling better now?" Flora asked as she removed the basin. "You don't want to move too fast. And your shoulder needs a little more than the first aid job I did to it last night. Even without the damage you did to it when you fell, it was anything but 'fine'!"

"Bones, get me on my feet now," Kirk ordered. He'd suddenly realised he only had on his underpants.

McCoy grinned at Flora. "Can you give us a minute?"

"I *am* a doctor, Len; there's no need for him to be coy." But she headed for the door.

Once the door closed behind her McCoy took his small field medical kit out of his bigger bag. "I should just let you suffer." He pressed home a hypo.

"You wouldn't dare."

"Don't try me. If it wasn't for the fact that Spock's disappeared, I would."

"Spock's gone?" Kirk came to his feet again.

"Take it slowly." McCoy caught him as he swayed.

"But.. how?"

"Some time during the night. Unlike yours, his bed had been slept it." He glanced slyly at Kirk. "You didn't get up to anything, did you?"

Kirk looked at him with eyes full of both physical and mental pain. "I don't know."

"Jim, how do you manage to get yourself into these situations?" McCoy sighed as he handed Kirk his trousers.

"If I knew that, they wouldn't be a problem, would they?"

"Nope."

McCoy helped Kirk to the door. Even after the shot he'd been given he was still unsteady on his feet.

Flora was waiting outside the door. "Is this wise, Len?" she asked.

"I'll be fine," Kirk said. "Er... Flora... Did I behave myself?" McCoy shot him a dirty look.

"Commander, you were the perfect sailor." She opened the outside door for them. Outside, the wind whistled down the road past the houses, tugging at their clothes.

Kirk groaned inwardly as McCoy settled him in the front seat of the staff car. Closing the door, McCoy turned to Flora.

"Did he behave, Flora?" he murmured.

"He was a perfect gentleman. Look, Len, I can see it's

important to you for some reason - I couldn't resist teasing him, but the truth is, he saw me home, I gave him a hot drink, he got up to leave and passed out. Nothing happened - he didn't even try to kiss me."

McCoy nodded. "He has something of a reputation as a womaniser, and it's mostly unearned. I'll let him stew for a while, but I'll tell him later. Thanks, Flora. We may not see you again - now that the Enquiry here is over, our orders to move on could arrive any time, which is one reason I want him back at HQ."

She nodded. "Wartime friendships are likely to be short. I understand. All the best to you."

He gripped her arm briefly, then climbed into the driver's seat of the car.

"You're not going to drive, are you?" Kirk muttered.

"I got here all right. And I think I can manage better than you did, your first time." McCoy started up, put the engine into gear, and started off surprisingly smoothly. As they turned the first corner, Kirk glanced back, in time to see Flora wave, then turn back into her house.

"All right, Bones. Spock. What do you think's going on?"

"I think the Guardian took him back. Jim, it's the only explanation. Now, I didn't tell Flora, but the main reason I hauled you out of bed is that you've got a meeting with the ACOS at 11. That gives you one and a half hours to pull yourself together. How's the head?" He swung the car gracefully into the main street.

"Thumping."

"Well, I did tell you - no drink." McCoy couldn't resist repeating himself. "Honestly, Jim - if it's not you, it's Spock. Sometimes I wonder how either of you ever survived to grow up."

Spock reappeared on Azaria, standing in the Time Guardian's portal. The look of pure relief on the Guardian's face surprised the Vulcan.

"I am sorry, Mr. Spock, for not giving you any warning, but it was essential I return you immediately. A situation was arising which meant there was a 95% chance of your being identified as non-Human, and you know what that would have meant. As it is, you could have done nothing more at Stromness."

"And the Captain?"

"He will follow shortly. I can give you a visual display if you wish to see the events."

"Yes, I would."

Spock only just managed to keep his expression neutral as the portal filled with a picture of the Captain in a strange bed, clearly hurt.

Once Kirk had washed, shaved and changed his uniform, it was time for him to make his way to the Admiral's office.

McCoy was waiting for him at the top of the stairs. "How are you feeling now?"

"O.K.," Kirk replied less than truthfully. He was still very pale and obviously shaky. "I thought you gave me a detoxin?"

"No. I forgot them - but anyway, I didn't really expect to need them. Just how much did you have to drink?"

"Not that much. And I was just drinking beer," he added as they came to a stop outside the Admiral's door.

Kirk knocked on the door.

"Come."

He entered, closing the door behind him. McCoy shook his head and leaned back against the wall as he waited for Kirk to reappear.

Inside, the Admiral looked searchingly at Kirk. "By the look of you, you'd better sit down before you fall down. I heard you were at the inn last night?"

"Yes, sir."

"Drinking beer?" He shook his head at Kirk's muttered assent. "Kirk, when you live on an island you're dependant on supplies coming in by sea, and there are certain priorities - especially just now. Alcohol - of any kind - comes fairly low on the list. So places like the inn make their own. And home-made beer is very, very potent."

"So I found out, sir."

"The hard way. How much did you have?"

"Er... about four pints, sir, spread over the evening. I didn't want to drink too much."

"And then I bet you had a hot drink?"

"Yes, sir."

"Fatal. Feel like hell, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I have the very cure." The Admiral was enjoying himself. Something like this hadn't happened for a while - the personnel posted permanently to Stromness had all learned the dangers of the inn's home-brewed beer, and most of them, having suffered themselves, got a quiet chuckle out of seeing some other unsuspecting soul enduring a hangover when he had thought he hadn't drunk too much.

"I wish you'd tell me, sir."

"I want you to take the HMS Sword to Rosyth Dockyard - leaving

today."

Kirk swallowed hard. It was blowing a gale outside! "To... Rosyth Dockyard, sir? Today?"

"That's right. You do have command training, and you have been in command of a ship before, have you not?"

Kirk groaned inwardly. A ship, yes... but not a small naval vessel in a sea renowned for its roughness while a gale was blowing!

"Yes, sir."

"So what's the problem? Afraid your stomach won't stand up to it?" the Admiral asked slyly.

It probably wouldn't, Kirk admitted to himself, but he wasn't about to give the Admiral the satisfaction of knowing it. "No, sir, but the wind hasn't moderated since yesterday, and all ships were stormbound last night. The Sword isn't at the pier here - where is she now?"

"She spent the night at the far end of Scapa Flow. She's on her way here now." The Admiral's voice changed, becoming completely serious. "This is an Intelligence job, Kirk. The Sword has been fitted with some new radar equipment that's gone wrong, and Rosyth is the only Dockyard capable of fixing it. It is quite urgent."

"I see. What is so special about the equipment?"

"I honestly do not know."

If Kirk was surprised, he hid it well. "And what has happened to her own Captain?"

"He's been transferred to the Essex, effective immediately. The Chief Engineer and MO are going too."

"So I am at liberty to take my own men in their places?" Kirk suddenly realised that this must be the Guardian's way of getting them home.

"Yes, all of them. You'll leave the Sword at Rosyth, where your new orders will be waiting. Here are your present orders from Naval Intelligence." He handed over some papers. "In brief - you're to get the Sword to Rosyth if at all possible. If there's any danger of the Germans' capturing her, scuttle her to prevent it. I'm afraid this could be a suicide mission."

"Yes, sir."

"Good. She'll be docking as close to Stromness as the weather will allow; my launch is at your disposal." The Admiral held out his hand. "I don't envy you your job, Kirk. Good luck. Enjoy your temporary command."

Scott, Keller and Tyson were all waiting in the office that had been assigned to Kirk. They all knew that their time here was nearly up, and Scott was pacing the floor in a typical Kirk imitation as he waited with growing impatience for their return to their own time and their own ship. He stopped dead in his tracks as

Kirk entered, McCoy close behind him.

"Ah, good. You're all here."

"Now maybe you'll tell us what the Admiral wanted," McCoy growled.

"Well, there wasn't any point in telling you, just to have to repeat it all for the others," Kirk pointed out. He looked round. "Gentlemen, you are now looking at the new Captain of HMS Sword." He gave that little bit of information time to sink in before adding, "and you lot form part of my crew. We leave today."

McCoy collapsed into a chair. Scott looked joyful at the prospect of getting his hands on an 'antique' engine. Tyson and Keller just looked at each other.

"Are you serious, Jim?" McCoy finally broke the silence.

"Deadly serious, Bones, so I suggest you put on your best sea legs."

"You are serious." McCoy saw the look on Kirk's face. "Don't worry about my sea legs - what about your own?"

"I'll manage."

"How soon 'today'?" Scott asked.

"As soon as she gets here. She's on her way up Scapa Flow right now. When she arrives, we're off. There is just one problem."

"What problem?" McCoy asked. Warning bells were ringing in his mind once more.

"This is something of a suicide mission. The Sword is equipped with some new radar equipment which must not fall into enemy hands. If necessary to prevent that, we have to scuttle the ship."

"You mean go down with all hands?" McCoy asked blankly.

"That's the orders."

"What's so important about this radar?"

Tyson glanced at Kirk. "If I may, sir?" At Kirk's nod, he went on. "Well, Doctor, in this era radar was a method of detecting an approaching enemy while he was still some way away. Around 1933 the Germans were ahead in radar technology, but by 1939 the British had drawn ahead because they were concentrating on aircraft detection."

"I still don't understand," McCoy said. "If both sides had radar..."

"It's not so much what they have now as what they will have," Tyson said. "By 1942-43 Hitler had stopped work on German radar while the British were still working on improving it. Eventually they could detect something as small as a submarine periscope at almost 1200 metres.

"It wasn't until 1943 that the Germans finally captured an

airborne set and discovered how advanced the British radar was - so you see we can't let them get their hands on that ship and its radar or history will be changed."

"How come you know so much about it? You sound as if you've been taking lessons from a certain Vulcan."

"No, Doctor. It was part of our basic Starfleet training - the history behind some of our equipment. It was radar that finally led to sensor development. I've always been interested in what you might call the history of technology. I found that part of the course particularly interesting."

"Useful," Kirk commented. "Do you know how to use this radar?"

"Roughly, sir."

"Good."

"But surely they'll leave the First Officer, sir?" Keller asked.

"I hope so! It's one thing commanding our Lady and quite another commanding a sea-going vessel." Kirk sounded worried and looked as though he was going to be sick again.

"What's up, Jim?" McCoy asked, a little calmer now.

"I'll never fake it, Bones - never in a million years will I be able to fake being able to command a sea-going vessel during a gale!"

Any reply McCoy might have made was lost when the phone on the desk rang.

"Kirk," the Captain said into the receiver. A short silence, then - "We'll be right there." He put down the receiver very gently. "That was Harbour Control. The Sword's just tying up now. She's managed to get into the harbour - how, in this gale, I don't know. Someone on board is good."

"Looks like this is it," Scott said.

"All right, gentlemen. Get your kitbags and meet me in the foyer in ten minutes. Dismissed."

He took five of those minutes to stuff his gear into his kitbag, and reached the foyer with two minutes to spare, hauling the bag behind him instead of carrying it on his shoulder in the approved fashion. Their transport had already arrived to take them the hundred metres or so to the ship - not a staff car, as he might have expected, but a three ton truck. Flinging their kitbags into the back of the thing they climbed in for the short, cold, bumpy and extremely noisy journey.

"I feel as if every bone in my body has been bounced, rattled and thoroughly shaken! I shall never travel in one of those contraptions again."

"Somehow, Bones, I think I've heard that sort of statement before," Kirk responded as the driver appeared and released the

tailgate to let them out.

He had heard McCoy's moans and grinned cheerfully. "Sorry, sir, but this was the only transport available at the notice we got."

"We hardly needed transport at all!" McCoy growled.

The driver glanced back at the hotel and his grin widened. It was easily seen that he agreed. "Standard procedure, sir," he said. "Transport has to be provided."

McCoy snorted and heaved his kitbag onto his shoulder.

The HMS Sword was securely tied up, her gangplank out as she awaited her new Captain. A line of ordinary ratings stood to attention at the top of the plank.

The Chief Petty Officer piped the command officers aboard.

"Permission to come aboard," Kirk asked the First Officer who was standing next to the CPO.

"Permission granted. Captain, Captain Macksey sends his apologies for not being here himself, but the ACOS requested his presence as soon as we arrived."

Kirk nodded. "I'm not surprised. The Admiral's a real live wire, doesn't like to waste any time."

"The ship is yours, Captain," the First Officer went on.

There was no proper hand-over procedure as Kirk was only in command until they reached the Firth of Forth and Rosyth Dockyard, eighteen hours away - if that.

"Thank you, Commander."

"I'll show you to your quarters later, sir. Doctor, if you just follow the able seaman there, he'll show you to sickbay. Engineer, you should be able to find your way to the engines. You two - " He nodded to Tyson and Keller - "I'll need you on the bridge. Chief, stand by to cast off on my signal."

"Aye, sir."

"This way, Captain."

As the First Officer led them to the bridge, Kirk noticed that able seamen were taking their kitbags below.

The countdown had begun.

Disaster minus one hour.

The Sword was under full steam, one hour out of Stromness. Jim Kirk stood silently on the bridge, frozen. Within minutes of starting his watch he had been grateful for the duffel coat he had been handed.

The bosun had the wheel. Nothing was showing up on the radar.

"You're leaving us at Rosyth, sir?" the bosun asked as he held the Sword steady on course.

"That's right. I think I'm only here to satisfy the book. Your First Officer seems perfectly capable of getting you there without me."

"Aye, sir, he's good. But he doesn't have the seniority yet to be promoted," the bosun said, answering Kirk's unasked question.

"Sir, picking up something on the radar," Tyson reported.

"Can you make out what it is?" Kirk asked.

"No, sir, it's only barely detectable. I can't get the image any clearer," he apologised.

"That will be because we're one antenna out," the bosun said.

Kirk nodded. "Get the First Officer up here," he ordered.

The First Officer arrived within moments. "Sir?"

"Something on the radar," Kirk told him.

The First Officer looked at Tyson with some respect. "You've done well to spot anything with malfunctioning equipment," he said. "Have you tried the anti sea clutter switch?"

"No, sir."

"It should help."

If only he knew! Tyson was thinking.

The clockwise rotation of the trace continued round, but the fuzzy blip had gone. Tyson straightened for a moment, easing his back and looking for the requisite switch, then bent over the viewer again. The strain of watching the radar screen was beginning to tell on him. Strange - this was not so different from watching the hooded viewers on the Enterprise, so why should his eyes feel tired? Perhaps the difference was the light intensity; on the Enterprise they had proper lighting, while here the bridge was badly lit. He did not let his concentration lapse, however. He reached forward for the switch and pressed it gently. He saw the effect almost immediately; the whole screen was now presenting an almost clear orange disc of light.

"I've got the screen clearer now, sir... The blip's gone. Whatever it was may have moved out of range."

"We can't guarantee that," Kirk said. "Just keep your eyes open. If it appears again, try to get a bearing on it." He hoped he sounded more confident than he felt.

"Yes, sir."

The waves were lapping up and over the Sword's bow, sending curtains of spray flying up and over the bridge. McCoy appeared in the doorway in the company of a mountain of spray.

"Get that door closed!" the First Officer shouted. "What the hell are you doing here, Doctor?"

"Checking on my patient," McCoy replied. "How's the arm holding up, Jim?"

"It's easier than it was," Kirk replied.

"Good. Can't you stop this tub from rolling like a roller coaster?" he asked as the ship dipped and climbed again.

"Sorry, Bones, it's this weather," Kirk told him.

Disaster minus five minutes.

The Sword had only approximately two and a half nautical miles left to travel.

Convinced that the blip Tyson had detected spelled their return to their own time, Kirk decided to help the Guardian pick them up. Keller was already on the bridge along with Tyson and himself, peering ahead through glasses in an excellent imitation of the First Officer. McCoy had come up to the bridge to check on Kirk's arm, and Kirk had quietly ordered him to remain there. Now he called Scott up to the bridge as well, ostensibly for a report on engine efficiency in the adverse weather conditions.

"I've got it again, sir!" Tyson looked up, his eyes bloodshot.

"Range?"

"I can't get a proper contact, sir."

"Number One, you have a look. Keller, can you see anything?"

"No, sir. There's nothing out there."

"You could hide a herd of elephants in those waves," McCoy grumbled.

"It could be just related to the faulty antenna," the First Officer said slowly after he had watched a complete circle on the screen.

"Keep watching."

Disaster minus one minute.

The trace turned a full circle.

"Got it, sir! Bearing two two, to port!"

"Hard to starboard!" Kirk shouted.

Disaster minus thirty seconds.

The ship started to turn, but sluggishly, her bow cutting into

the huge waves. Great mountains of water were flung skywards, slashing and hissing across the bridge, smashing against the windows. She started to gain momentum, turning faster until everyone on the bridge could feel the arc under them; but she had only completed half her turn when she was hit - two torpedoes from the German U-boat that had been too deep for their faulty radar to detect as more than the faintest blip.

The bridge exploded under them, sending everyone flying from one end of it to the other. Kirk landed hard against the torn metal, hitting his head. The metal ripped into his back, sending him into the dark depths of unconsciousness.

Disaster plus one minute.

The torpedoes had hit her hard. There was no time for anything as a series of explosions ripped through her hull.

Watching, unobserved, were the vultures; satisfied that no-one could survive, the periscope went down and the 'blip' was gone, yet another sole craft to add to its total. The U-boat slithered away like the snake it was, to await yet another unsuspecting prey for its dinner - unaware of the prize catch the Sword would have been had they just captured her instead of sinking her.

Disaster plus two minutes.

McCoy managed to scramble across to where Kirk had landed and felt for a pulse. Kirk lifted a dazed head; he could feel hot sticky blood trickling down the side of his face, and tried to raise his right hand to touch his forehead. He only succeeded in causing himself searing, pulsing pain to the point where he almost passed out again.

"What hit us?"

"Torpedoes," Scott replied.

"The bosun's dead," Tyson reported.

"Keller?"

"Here."

"Number One?"

There was no answer, and before Kirk could say anything more he felt the effect of the Time Portal catching him. They dematerialised just as the Sword slid to her watery grave in one last explosion. No-one left on her had any chance of surviving.

Spock was watching the events with horror written all over his face.

"Get them out now!" he shouted as he realised the ship was about to explode. The Time Guardian's hands were dancing over the controls. Picking up five signals under these conditions was far

from easy, and he was grateful that Kirk had thought to get them all in the same place; if Scott had still been in engineering, it would have been almost impossible to save him as well as the others.

With one final explosion the ship blew up and disappeared beneath the waves.

Spock stood anxiously beside the Time Portal, all the control he could muster barely enough to mask the anguish fighting to give itself expression.

"Where are they?" he demanded as his control slipped.

The Guardian pressed the final contact and watched with thinly disguised relief as the Enterprise men shimmered into existence.

It had been far, far closer than he liked.

"Stop fussing, Bones, I'm all right!" Jim Kirk was saying even as he materialised.

"Jim!" Spock's attempt to disguise his concern failed.

Kirk came awkwardly to his feet as dizziness swam over him.

"You are injured. I am sorry," the Guardian said.

"I'll do. Is anyone else hurt?" Kirk asked as he fought for control. His back felt cold and sticky; he knew that the jagged bulkhead had ripped into it, and that he would have to let McCoy see it eventually, but for the moment he was more concerned about sparing the Guardian's feelings. He tried to manoeuvre himself into a position where nobody could see his back, aware that McCoy knew there was something wrong.

"Everyone's fine except you," McCoy told him bluntly. He knew full well that his Captain was injured both by the way he was holding himself and by the reddish colour of the water dripping from his clothes, but he also guessed Kirk's reasoning. The Guardian did what he must to keep Time running smoothly, but he did not enjoy seeing anyone suffer in the process.

"Spock, are you all right?"

"Yes, Captain."

"Time Guardian, our thanks. I will inform Starfleet Command of what has happened. Perhaps, when it is convenient, you could send them your recording to confirm it." He swayed, unable to control his growing weakness any longer; McCoy, who had been watching him carefully, reacted instantly and caught him before he could fall. He realised immediately that Kirk's back was torn open, and his concern for Kirk pushed aside his sensitivity towards the Guardian's feelings.

"Spock - "

The Vulcan was already opening his communicator. "Spock to Enterprise. Six to beam up. Medical emergency!"

The Enterprise's transporter locked onto them and they

shimmered away. The Time Guardian stood for a moment staring at the space they had occupied, quietly, in his own way, coming to terms with the realisation that Kirk had been badly injured; then he pushed the knowledge to the back of his mind along with all his other regrets for things he had been forced to do to keep Time running smoothly, without interruption by those who would like it changed to suit their personal wishes. He had a job to do; Wiseman was wandering loose in Time, and it was up to the Guardian to figure out where and when Wiseman would appear next.

Starfleet, he decided, was not going to be pleased about this, for someone - probably Kirk and his men again, since they knew Wiseman - would once again have to travel into the past, with all the risks that involved of accidentally changing something, in yet another attempt to stop the man's insane wish to alter history.

Well, he thought, I know my answer if we are blamed for this failure. We caught him once. The fault now lies with whoever let Wiseman escape, to return to the past for a second time. I will not see Kirk blamed for it.

Jim Kirk came round, to the slow realisation that he was in the Enterprise's sickbay. How he had got there he could not remember; his last clear memory was of a ship exploding under him. He lay for a moment, trying to clear his thoughts.

Obviously the Guardian had got him off in time, but were all his men safe? Remembering a headache, he turned his head gently from side to side. It seemed to have gone...

"Dr. McCoy! The Captain's conscious." The voice sounded familiar, but it was too much effort to try to recognise it.

Worrying over his report as he sat in his office, McCoy heard Christine Chapel's voice with relief, and shot out of the door like a scalded cat.

He slid to a halt beside Kirk's bed, eyes fixed on the readout. Yes... not normal yet - they wouldn't be normal for a while - but decidedly better.

"Bones..." It was a hoarse whisper, hardly audible.

"Don't try to talk, Jim. Christine, a drink."

As if by magic, a glass appeared in front of him, and he took it, mentally assessing its temperature. Cool but not cold. Good.

"Drink this." McCoy adjusted the straw in the glass so that Kirk could drink through it without being drowned. "Slowly! Chris, call Spock."

"Yes, Doctor."

Kirk finished the liquid, not knowing and indeed not caring what it was, and tried to ease himself up.

"Don't you dare."

"But - "

"But nothing. Spock's had everything under control for the past six days. If you think you're going to undo my handiwork because you're not able to delegate, you're not on! Jim, another half inch and the metal that ripped your back open would have killed you. You lost far too much blood - how you stayed on your feet as long as you did, I'll never know - and you've been out cold for nearly a week. You're not in a fit state to jump up and take over looking after a kitten, let alone a Starship."

"The Doctor is correct, Captain." Spock had silently appeared at the foot of Kirk's bed.

"Spock. You're safe."

"Yes, Captain. The Guardian retrieved me early because of the danger of my being identified as an alien - I could not, after all, wear a balaclava indoors."

"And the others?"

"All safe. Yours is the only injury. Don't you remember?"

"The last thing I remember is the Sword being hit by a torpedo. At least everyone is safe."

"For the time being," McCoy grumbled. "If Starfleet gets - "

"Dr. McCoy!" Spock snapped, but he was too late.

"What about Starfleet?" Kirk asked, trying to push himself upright.

"Lie down!" McCoy panicked. "Jim, I've patched you up, but try to do too much yet and you'll start bleeding again!"

"But what about Starfleet?" Kirk asked urgently. "Dammit, Bones, I'm the Captain. I may be flat on my back, but I've got to know what's going on!"

Spock and McCoy looked at each other, and Kirk knew he had won when Spock turned back to him.

"Starfleet has issued us with standing orders," he said, and hesitated.

"Go on."

"If and when he appears again, we have to drop everything and go after Wiseman. The Guardian thinks his reappearance will once again be some time during Earth's Second World War, since he is so obsessed by that period."

"I don't believe it," Kirk said, letting his head drop back on the pillow.

Spock looked concerned; the look on Kirk's face was new to him. "Jim?"

"If Starfleet thinks I'm going to go galloping around the past again in a hurry, it can take a running jump at itself." He drew as deep a breath as his aching body would permit. "I am staying here until Bones says I can get up. Until then, Spock, you have the con."

Spock and McCoy looked at each other again.

"Jim, are you feeling all right?" Spock asked suspiciously.

"No," Kirk replied honestly. "I feel like I've been to hell and back."

"I don't believe this," McCoy muttered. "Spock, get out of here before he changes his mind!"

Kirk smiled to himself. If only they knew what he was thinking! He was going to enjoy himself for the next few days; he would be a model patient, not complaining about anything, but he'd keep them running, and with luck McCoy would soon let him out, if only to his cabin.

The Enterprise was in capable hands and everyone was home safe - until the next time they had to go chasing after Wiseman in the past to save the future.

As he watched Spock heading for the door, hands clasped behind his back, Kirk wondered just where and when Wiseman would return.

"Spock - " he said in as near a shout as his weak voice would permit.

"Yes, Captain?" Spock turned in the doorway.

"Jim." McCoy's voice held a warning. "No paperwork."

"Who said anything about paperwork?" Kirk asked innocently. "All I want is a game of chess when Spock comes off duty."

McCoy looked suspiciously at him as Spock asked, "Doctor?"

"As long as that's all it is. No discussing ship's business or anything like that - or I'll put you to sleep for a week, Jim. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes."

"Right. Spock, out of here before he does ask for some reports to check over."

As the door slid shut, Kirk put the next part of his plan into operation. "Bones - I'm hungry."

"That's a good sign. I'll get Christine to bring you some soup."

McCoy checked the readings again, then turned and headed back to his office. He had his own worries. He, too, was less than happy about their new standing orders. Next time they might not be so lucky; next time he might not be able to save the Captain.

Twice now they had gone back in time to stop Wiseman, and twice Kirk had been injured and ended up in sickbay when he got home. It might well be third time unlucky for all of them.

The question remained - was the Guardian right in thinking that Wiseman would reappear some time between 1939 and 1945?

At his office door he glanced back. Despite his claim of being

hungry, Kirk's eyes had drooped shut and McCoy could tell that he was asleep again. Good.

"That's the best medicine for you, Jim," he said softly. "Time to worry about Wiseman when he shows up again." When... not if.

Oh, well - for the moment, at least, let tomorrow look after itself.

It was good to be home.